

AFTER THE BATTLE



DACHAU

Number 27

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Edited by Winston G. Ramsey

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CONTENTS

DACHAU	1
The Webling Incident	30
WRECK RECOVERY	
Epping Forest Ju 88	34
CRIME IN WWII	
The 10th Replacement Depot at Lichfield	41

Front Cover: The entrance to the Protective
Custody Compound at Dachau concentration
camp.

Centre Pages: The oven of the old crematorium
building now preserved as a macabre tourist
attraction. In 1942 this was superseded by a more
modern, four-body incinerator built by the camp
inmates themselves.

Back Cover: A unique aircraft excavation in Epping
Forest by the London Air Museum in 1976.

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University Press, London, 1939; Nerin E. Gun *The
Day of the Americans*, Fleet Publishing Cor-
poration, New York, 1966 and *42nd 'Rainbow'
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The Dachau guard contingent wearing Bavarian State Police greatcoats in front of the
original factory buildings in May 1933 (Bundesarchiv).

When Hitler came to power on January 30,
1933, Germany was in a highly volatile state.
The First World War had ended in defeat
followed by revolution and partial occupation.
This traumatic sequence of events was
compounded by the humiliation of the
Versailles Treaty. The economic collapse
which followed resulted in widespread
unemployment and poverty and political
polarisation which eventually toppled Ger-
many's first republic and led to Hitler's
seizure of power.

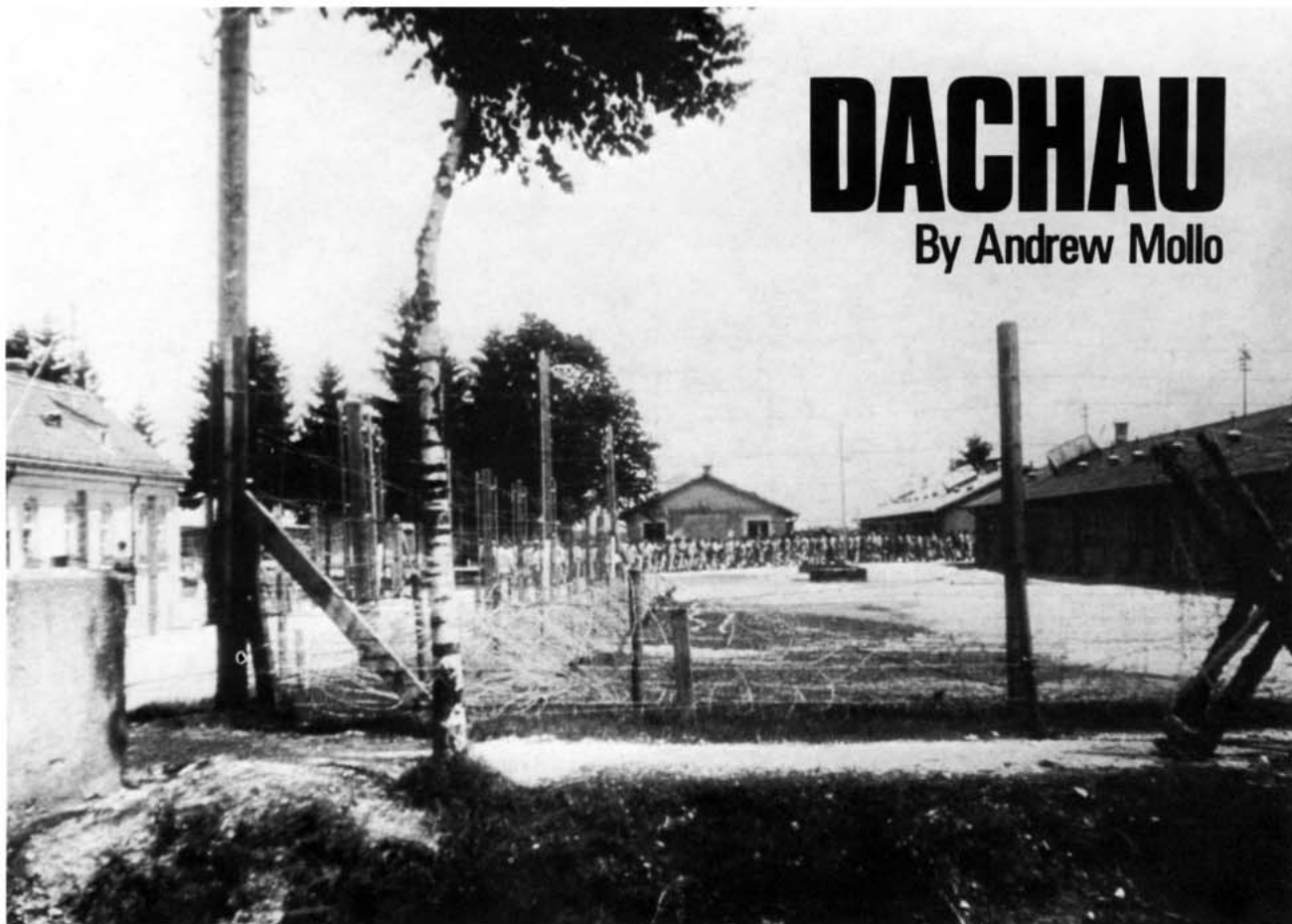
One of Hitler's first and far-reaching acts
was to pass the 'Ordinance for the Protection
of People and State'. This followed the
burning of the Reichstag and was intended to
bring to an end the political violence on the
streets of Germany by giving the police the
power to arrest anybody considered an enemy
of the new state and hold them in protective
custody for up to three months. The im-
mediate result of this act was a flood of
detainees who were thrown into police jails
until they were filled to overflowing. The
National Socialists had been called to assist
the police in keeping order in the streets by

providing Stormtroopers and SS men to act as
auxiliary police. These Hilfpolizisten began to
set up prisons in empty factories where they
held the rank-and-file members of the
German Communist Party and other op-
ponents. These prisons became the fief of the
local SA commander who was answerable to
nobody. Discipline was completely arbitrary
and the bitterness and hatred which existed
between the Nazis and their opponents led to
the most frightful abuse of detainees which
sometimes resulted in death. So bad were the
conditions in these 'wild camps' that
responsible members of the civil authorities
and legal profession tried to have them closed
down and those responsible brought to justice
and, in a few cases, they were successful.

As the Reich Leader of the SS Heinrich
Himmler and his deputy Reinhard Heydrich
consolidated their hold over the police forces
of the German states, they assumed
responsibility for some of these 'wild camps'.
Rather than continue them, they decided to
close them down and concentrate the
Bavarian detainees in a large camp outside
Munich at Dachau.



SS-Oberfuehrer Theodor 'Papa' Eicke relaxes in the company of his men. Note the D on
the collar patch, worn prior to the introduction of the death's head emblem in 1934.



DACHAU

By Andrew Mollo

The site of this camp was a former gunpowder factory which had been a subsidiary of the Royal Bavarian Army arsenal at Ingolstadt. The dilapidated buildings were patched up by members of the Volunteer Labour Service and, on March 23, 1933, the first sixty detainees were admitted. On arrival these 'politicals' were housed in eleven sheds which had formerly been workshops. The huts were enclosed by a barbed-wire fence guarded by five watch-towers. Outside the fence were a further fifteen sheds for the SS staff and their families and the camp kitchen. Three times a day prisoners had to march under escort to the kitchen, collect their food (weak soup and bread) and eat it on the spot.

In those early days, the conditions in Dachau were equally primitive for both the SS men and their captives. The SS guards, who at the time constituted the only armed and barracked unit of the SS, were of particularly low quality, and were mostly *Versorgungsanwaerter* (former soldiers living on welfare benefit) and, apart from being unintelligent and idle, were vicious and corrupt. They worked out their frustrations and prejudices on the hapless detainees and, since there was little supervision, no regulations, nor any money to provide the most basic amenities, it is not difficult to imagine what things were like.

By June 1933 Himmler was getting worried about the adverse publicity the 'wild camps' were generating and the bad light which it was throwing on his SS. In an attempt to improve conditions in the camp he sacked the first commander SS-Oberfuehrer Waeckerle and appointed SS-Oberfuehrer (senior colonel) Theodor Eicke in his place. Eicke, recently released from an institution himself, set to work with enthusiasm. He fired the worst elements on the camp's staff and subjected the rest to strict supervision and rigid discipline. At the same time he drafted a series of regulations (dated September 1,

Above: The original camp in the workshops of the gunpowder factory at Dachau was opened on March 23, 1933 — two months after the National Socialist Workers Party came to power in Germany. *Below:* The last remnants of the old factory buildings were demolished by the Bavarian authorities in the winter of 1978-79.



1933) for both prisoners and guards which were to form the basis on which all concentration camps were run until the end of the war. Arbitrary brutality by individual guards was strictly forbidden and replaced by various degrees of official punishment. Guards were taught to look upon the inmates as dangerous enemies of the state and so worthy of no sympathy. To show sympathy was a sign of

weakness and the guards were hardened both physically and mentally. Everything the inmates did had to be carried out at the double; caps had to be whipped off the moment an SS man appeared and woe-betide the man who reacted too slowly or who showed in his demeanour any hint of human dignity or pride because this was interpreted as insubordination. The permitted punishments



Above: Prisoners are released from Dachau camp just before Christmas 1933. Here they leave the camp by the old factory gates. These gates were demolished to make way for the impressive arched guardhouse which appears in the photo below.

laid down by Eicke ranged from punishment drill, flogging, deprivation of mail, withdrawal of rations, hard bed and the worst — suspension from a post by the wrists which had been tied behind the back. In extreme cases prisoners could be sentenced by SS legal officers to death by shooting or hanging.

In May 1934, an Englishman, Arnold Wilson, had the opportunity to visit Dachau Camp and in his diary (published by the Oxford University Press in 1939) he described his experiences:

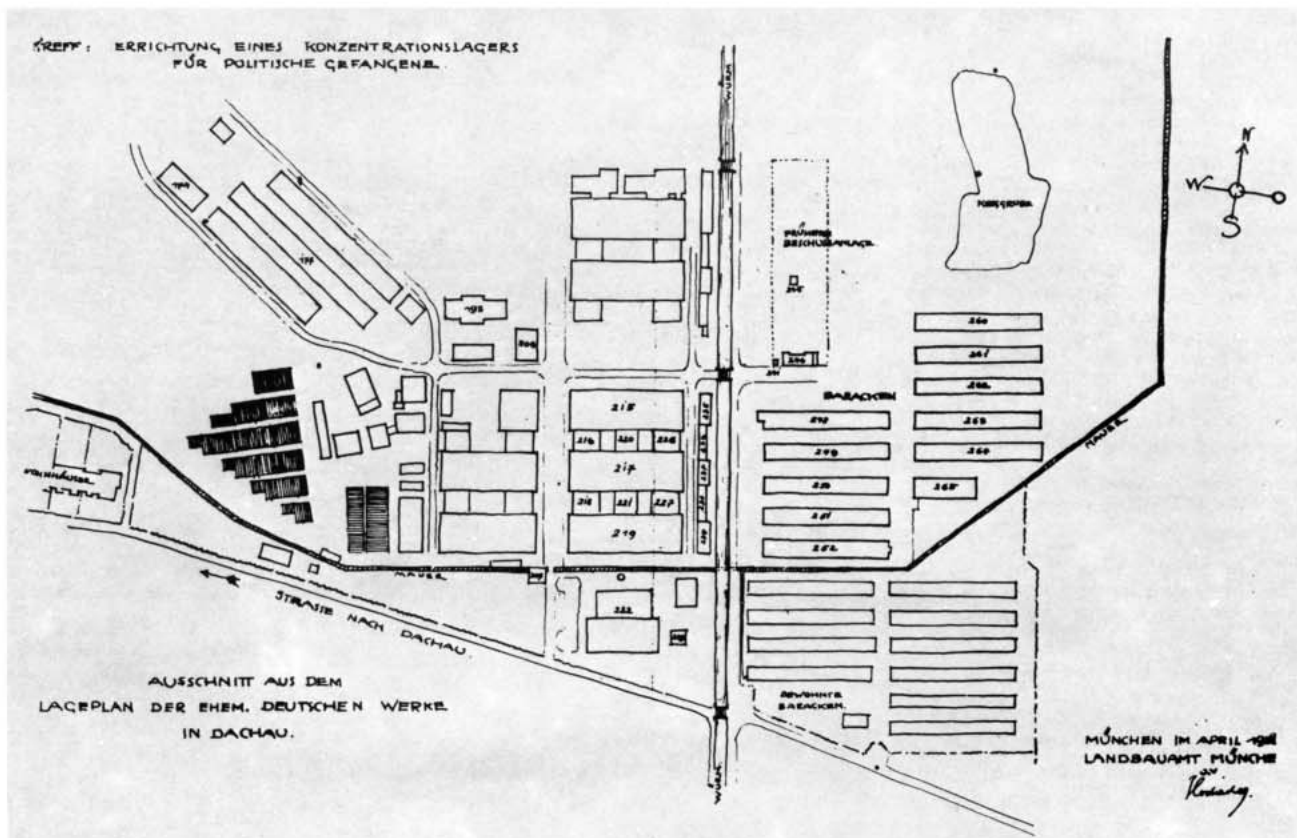
'By eight o'clock next morning I was at the gates of the Concentration Camp at Dachau which the Bavarian Police Service had, without any application on my part, invited me to visit. I carried no special letter, only an ordinary pass, and I was shown round by an officer who clearly was imperfectly informed as to my identity. There were, he told me, some 1,500 men in the camp, as compared with 2,500 six months ago. Of 25,000 men interned throughout Germany in 1933 only 10,000 were now left. He had only a score of Jews in the camp, "much less than the right and natural proportion," he observed. It was an old munitions factory; but for the barbed wire and the sentries in the black uniform of the SS it looked like an Arbeitsdienstlager. The men were in tighter quarters: three beds one above the other, as in the cabins of HM's transports when I first went East. The kitchens, the food in preparation, the type of work being done in the workshops, with no lack of machinery, were all normal to German eyes. There was a canteen, where luxuries could be bought, and where the more wealthy prisoners were expected to contribute to the comfort of their less fortunate brethren, a kind of jail super-tax. It was introduced to put an end to the victimization of the few by the many, and to prevent ill feeling.

'There was the same discipline as in the volunteers' camp; the same routine. A weekly newspaper was circulated, as in the Tegel jail. The men looked neither better nor worse fed than in the free camps or the jail, and neither better nor worse clad, except for a punishment squad of a dozen men, clean-shaven in a special dress who, on hands and knees, were weeding a gravel plot. They looked white and harried. I saw the men parading for inspection by the doctor and a dentist at work. There were some twenty or thirty waiting, a larger number than one would expect to find in a free camp but of course this camp has men of all ages, mostly over thirty. I saw scarcely any young men. They are not regarded as irreclaimable and were soon sent back to civil life. Yet there was in the atmosphere of the



Below: American forces round up SS outside the same building in 1945. Now within the perimeter of the Bavarian police barracks, this is one of the comparison photographs we were refused official permission to take during our visit in August 1979.





camp something against which my soul revolted. Prisoners in a regular jail do not fear and are not feared by their warders, but between the losing and winning sides in a civil war there is hatred and fear; and it was so here.'

Having knocked Dachau into shape, Eicke left to devote his special talents to the other SS camps and his place was taken by SS-Oberführer Deubel. From May 1, 1934 for the next two years, prisoners remembered this as the 'liberal' period in Dachau's history. By March 1935 Dachau had become one of seven principal concentration camps in Germany with 2,500 inmates which now included a number of criminals transferred from ordinary prisons and a variety of prisoners classified as 'anti-social'. Another Englishman, Christopher Sidgwick, visited Dachau in the spring of 1936 and his contemporary account is of great interest:

'By the main entrance I stopped. Two sentries, armed and in huge padded leather coats reaching to their shins, asked me what I wanted. I said I wanted to get inside — adding that I was not a German. I have never seen men look so huge and strong. No doubt their appearance was meant to dissuade convicts from attempting to escape as well as to keep warm in that snow. While one of them was telephoning to the Kommandant the other one told me that there were 1,800 convicts inside. He and his mate were on guard for two hours at a time.

'They had instructions to shoot at sight in the event of any major revolt. He, and all the warders and officials from the Kommandant downwards, were members of the SS, the Protective Police. Then they let me through and I was taken to another building where my passport was given the most thorough examination of its life, where I signed several forms without reading them, and where I was brought to the Kommandant. This man explained that he had to go into Munich and would be grateful if I would excuse him and accept the services of X., who would answer questions and show me round.

'The inside of the camp looked exactly like

Plan of the original camp showing the canal which separated factory from compound.

the inside of the better Labour Corps camps I had inspected near Bremen. The men's quarters were the same army huts. They were properly heated, ventilated, and lighted. They did not smell more musty than those of the Labour Corps. There was a space, a little street, between each row of huts and these streets were twice the width of a hut. As we came upon these huts we found the streets filled with convicts, some standing about smoking, some cleaning boots, others waiting to be marched off to whatever work there was to be had. As we passed they pulled off their knitted wool caps and braced themselves to attention.

'There was no saluting, no heiling of Hitler. X. told me that there were five categories of convict. Political prisoners, mostly Communists; Jews; the so-called "Traitors of the Common People"; hardened criminals of the

burglaring and pocket-picking type; and homosexuals. These five classes were kept separate from each other so that no one man from one class should ever speak to a man of another. We went into the first hut. As soon as the door was opened a voice shouted, "Achtung!" and the men leapt to attention. Some had been resting, some had been tidying their lockers and some had been washing. The head of the room, himself a convict, reeled off in the usual military fashion the number of men in the hut, the type, and what they were all doing. "These," said X., "are political prisoners. We keep them here in order that the peace of the country shall not be menaced. We do our best to prove to them that the theories they once had cannot be workable, and as soon as they agree that National Socialism is the best and only theory, they are released, watched for a time, and then



Prisoners are given their daily tasks in the summer of 1936.

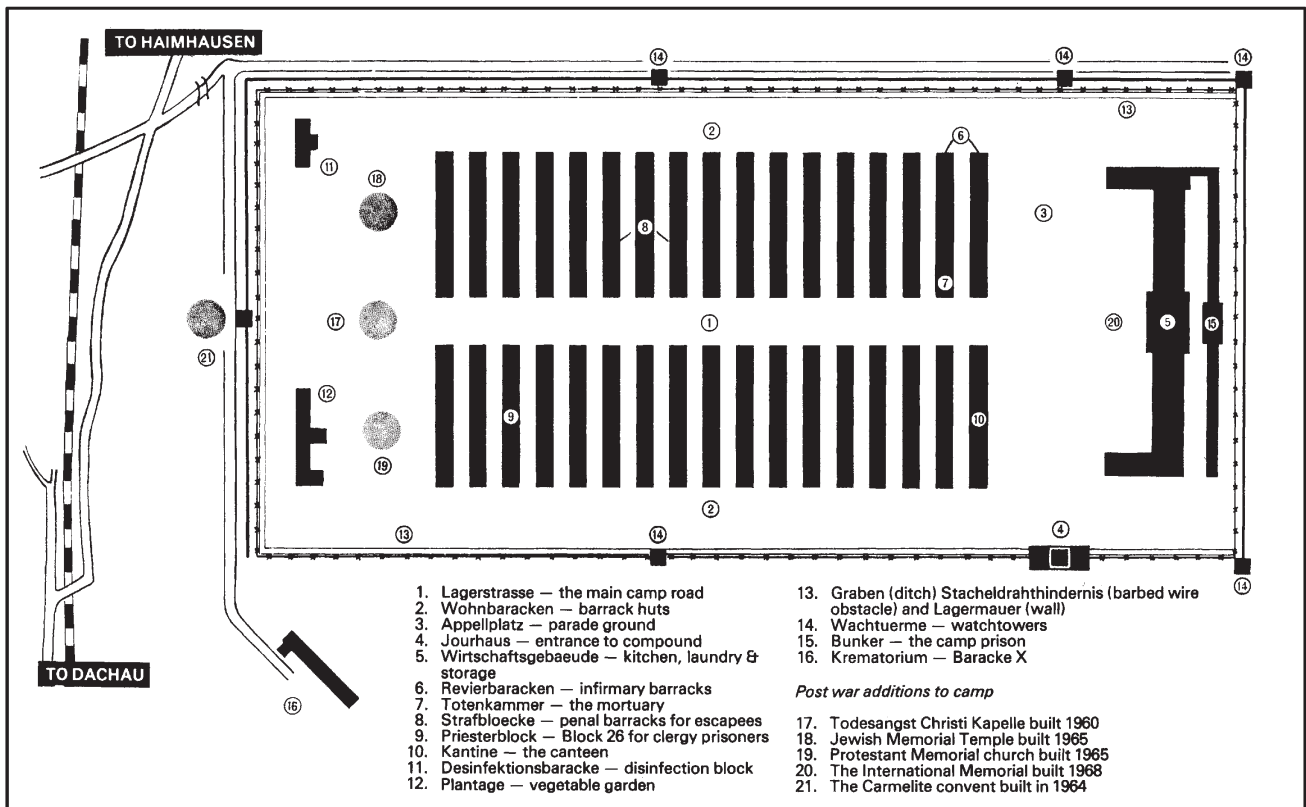
disregarded once we are satisfied that we have really converted them."

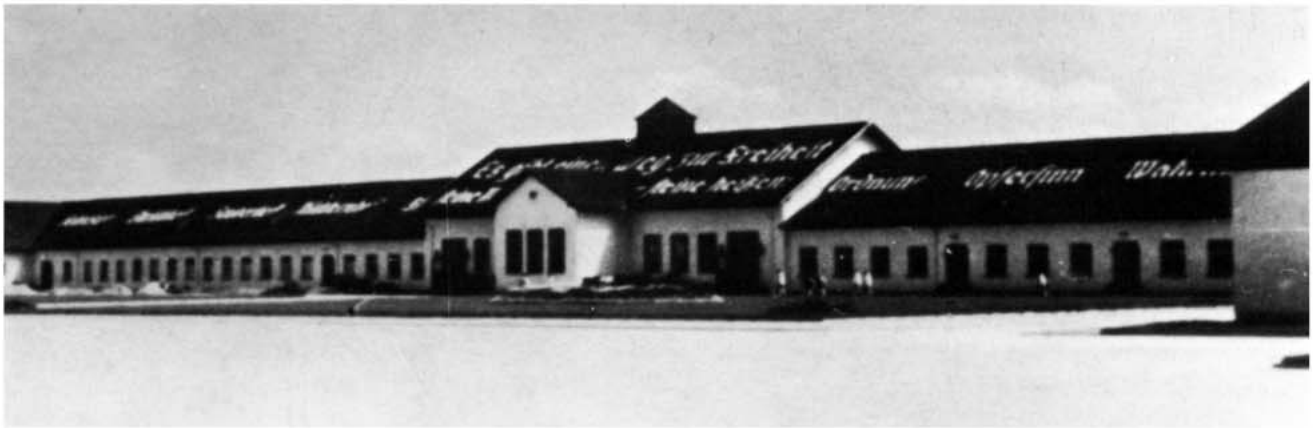
"We went to the kitchens just before lunch. These were two huge rooms with bare brick walls, filled with steam and a sickly stench of potato peel. Huge coppers were simmering with the lunch, a carrot soup of sorts. In other bins potatoes were steaming. I picked out one or two of these, broke them open and found them black and slimy inside. I asked for a sample of the soup and nearly spat it out: it was wretched slop. No doubt it was enough to keep alive on, but I found it very poor tack. I looked at the menu for the whole week, and there was soup down for each single day, disguised under different names with all the cunning skill of the landlady trying to spin out one single joint of mutton for a whole week. After a while the men began to come in. I could not see where they came from because the place was so thick with steam that you could not see across to the opposite wall. But in they came, in long lines. Their faces were meaningless smears coming and going in the steam.

"They said nothing. They lurched in with their two aluminium bowls, had one filled with the carrot slop and one with potatoes, and disappeared again to the dining-room. They could come once again for soup and as often as they liked for potatoes until the supply for that day was exhausted. As they tramped past us, hundreds and hundreds all the same, one or two noticed us and tried to stiffen to some sort of attention. These were doubtless of the kind that did everything to attract attention to themselves in order to get out again as quickly as possible. I did not blame them. But the majority of those lifeless men moved past us with eyes that did not see and senses that did not feel. Never in my life have I been more convinced that I was dreaming. I have never seen a more tragic spectacle because none of these men knew when he would be free again; and although I was convinced, from sundry papers that I was shown, that torturing and irresponsible flogging is a thing of the past in these camps (in Dachau they never denied, when I asked them point blank to do so, that men were slowly murdered with torture in 1933 and



Above: Prisoners building the new Protective Custody Camp in 1937-8. Below: The poplar-lined Lagerstrasse today looking south towards the Wirtschaftsgebäude — now housing the camp museum.





1934), I was equally convinced that no free Nazi had an inkling of what was going on behind these barbed-wire walls.

'Although I accepted these printed orders for what a Nazi statistic or order was worth, these men knew nothing of the matter. They do still live in a state of terror and any Nazi who denies this statement must go to Dachau and see a few of these wrecked men with his own eyes. I am not fool enough to suppose that I saw anything I was not meant to see there, but it was clear from the men's faces that they were terrified. They would not speak, they would not say anything that was likely to bring themselves up against authority. Unless printed regulations are being openly ignored, and by more than one officer, these men are not being tortured physically and are only beaten for violent attacks on the warders; but nevertheless, the horrors of living conditions in these camps cannot be exaggerated. I shall not quickly forget that bright February day which I spent in Dachau.'

At the beginning of 1937, Dachau became one of the four principal concentration camps since three of the original seven had been closed down and the remaining four enlarged. Now began the great period of reconstruction which was to convert the ramshackle collection of factory sheds and huts into a vast SS complex. Dachau was to consist not just of the concentration camp but a combined SS camp with headquarters buildings, barracks, training establishments and works, all of which were to be built, maintained and often even staffed by concentration camp inmates. The site of the original camp in the former gunpowder factory formed the centre of the huge complex with the SS camp lying to the west. To the east, on the far side of the canal, a huge rectangle (300 x 600 metres) comprised the new camp or Schutzhaftlager (Protective Custody Camp) with a capacity of 40,000 to 50,000 prisoners. At the southern end of this rectangle was a long brick-built block with wings at both ends which was known as the Wirtschaftsgebäude and this housed the cookhouse, shower rooms, canteen, depository for prisoners' effects, clothing shop, shoe and linen stores and the tailor's and cobbler's shops. On the roof of this building was painted in huge white letters the motto of the German concentration camps: 'There is only one Road to Freedom and its Milestones are: Obedience, Zeal, Honesty, Order, Cleanliness, Temperance, Truth, Sense of Sacrifice and Love of the Fatherland'.

Behind this block was the Bunker with individual cells for special privileged prisoners and the so-called 'dog kennels' which were tiny windowless cells in which a prisoner could neither lay nor stand. The yard between these two blocks was used for the carrying out of punishments and later executions.

The Protective Custody Camp was entered through an arched guardhouse on the west wall. Another salutary slogan greeted those

Above: The Wirtschaftsgebäude at the northern end of the compound with the slogan painted on the roof.

who passed through the gates: 'Arbeit Macht Frei' or 'Work gives Freedom'! This building was known as the Jourhaus and on the ground floor was to be found the guardroom and the offices of the roll-call leader (Rapportfuehrer) and the Block Leader (Blockfuehrer). On the first floor were the offices of the Leader of the Protective Custody Camp (Schutzhaftlagerfuehrer) and the representative of the Gestapo, the Vernehmungsfuehrer, who was responsible for maintaining the prisoners' records.

To prevent inmates from escaping, the

compound was surrounded by a formidable barrier. Between the huts and the outer fence was first a road, then a two-metre-wide grass strip, a ditch with low barbed-wire fence and finally a high electrified barbed-wire fence with, on its far side, a track used by the guards to patrol the perimeter. Overlooking the whole compound were seven watch-towers each of which was occupied around the clock by two guards with a machine gun, who could only enter the tower from outside the electrified fence.

The SS camp was entered by a long road



Above: The Bunker and yard between, situated at the rear of the Wirtschaftsgebäude where many prisoners were ill treated. Others were executed in front of the wall in the background. Below: Comparison showing the Bunker and yard today.







US Army photo taken May 27, 1945

called the 'Strasse der SS' which was lined on one side by villas for SS leaders and their families. At the end of the road was a square surrounded by more married quarters. On the north-east corner of this square was the main entrance to the SS camp which was built to replace the old factory gates. To the west of this gate were the barrack blocks and headquarters buildings and on the northern side lay a huge industrial area served by its own railway spur and power station. The main industries were the manufacture of wooden furniture and clothing for both prisoners and the SS while most of the weapons used by the SS were repaired and proofed in ordnance workshops.

The other major component of the SS Camp was what the SS called the Training Camp (Uebungslager). Here, before the war, were trained the administrative leaders of the SS, while newly commissioned leaders of the part-time Allgemeine-SS attended, from October 1937, courses at the Fuehrerschule. Later there was to be a medical school and a school for SS cooks.

The construction of this huge complex began in 1937, the inmates providing the construction labour working all hours in all weather, until the building programme was completed on August 15, 1938; a period remembered as the worst in the whole history of the camp. Dachau now assumed the appearance which it was to retain until the end of the war.

At the end of 1937 the camp population stood at 13,260 inmates. These consisted of the die-hard political opponents of Nazism who were identified by red triangles on their camp clothing. Common criminals had green and anti-socials and the work-shy wore black badges. Homosexuals were labelled with pink



Various coloured triangles identified the category of each prisoner.



Above: A contemporary photograph of the Jourhaus gateway into the compound through which every inmate had to pass. The wicket gate set in the iron trellis work contains the wording 'Arbeit Macht Frei'. Below: At first glance we assumed the wrought-ironwork was unchanged but close examination revealed a slightly changed letter form. We then discovered that the Americans had cut out the original letters and that these were remade by the museum's maintenance man! The original inscription was taken to the USA as a souvenir by a GI. Where is it now?



badges while the various categories of ideological enemies — clergy and members of such sects as Jehovah's Witnesses — had mauve with gypsies brown and emigres blue. Jewish inmates could wear any of the above badges, depending on the reason for their detention, but in addition they wore one of yellow so that the two triangles formed the Star of David.

In peacetime, when the camp was not overcrowded and when order and discipline was regulated, life was *just* bearable with the day starting at 3.15 a.m. in summer and a little later in winter. Three-quarters-of-an-hour were allocated for washing, making of beds, tidying up the barracks and breakfast and a quick visit to the latrine. All these activities had to be carried out in a tremendous rush but to standards which far exceeded those demanded of a Prussian Guardsman. SS guards seized on the slightest defect or speck of dust to meet out either individual or collective punishment. Floors were so highly polished that prisoners had to remove their boots or clogs before entering their barracks. Once a week prisoners were allowed a shower and this bath, together with bread and bed, constituted the 'three good Bs' at Dachau.

Breakfast over, the prisoners formed up and marched to the Appellplatz for roll call which lasted for about forty-five minutes. If a prisoner was missing all hell was let loose and the rest of the prisoners had to stand at attention until he was located. Once found the missing prisoner was paraded in the front of the assembled camp with a sign around his neck on which was scrawled: 'Greetings, here I am again!'. Then he was locked up in a tiny punishment cell while the other prisoners then marched off to work. Those that remained in the Protective Custody Compound were responsible for looking after the barracks and grounds and collecting the food for the prisoners' lunch. Others worked in the kitchens, clothing and cobbler's stores and shops and in the herb garden. Outside the camp prisoners toiled in the clothing and wood-working shops or in the other factories and stores. Prison labourers were used for the maintenance of the SS Camp and as domestic servants in the married quarters. Inmates with special skills were set-up in little workshops where they made a wide range of decorative goods for the SS officers and their families. A particularly busy time was at Christmas when the inmates turned out toys and presents to



adorn SS Christmas trees. However, despite Himmler's and Theodor Eicke's efforts to instil a sense of honour in the SS, Dachau was a mass of corruption and many an SS man grew rich out of exploiting camp labour and SS property for his personal gain.

Prisoners marched back to their barracks for an hour at lunchtime and then marched back to work. Work continued for varying lengths of time depending on the type of work and season. Once work was finished there was another roll-call, which left a little time for cleaning and repairing clothing, writing a letter or reading a book. At 8.00 p.m. in summer (or earlier in winter) a siren wailed and prisoners had to return to their barracks; twenty minutes later lights went out and everyone had to be in bed.

Discipline inside the barracks, the observance of the routine and the detailing of the inmates to the various daily duties, was the responsibility of the Block Senior and his deputies the Room Seniors. These privileged prisoners were usually chosen by the SS from the ranks of the German criminal classes since the SS felt an affinity to these types and found them capable of an excess of brutal zeal in carrying out their duties. Comparatively few SS men actually appeared inside the compound except at roll-call and it is all the more surprising how so few SS men were able to hold complete mastery over so many inmates. The system by which they maintained control was carefully worked out on the basis of divide and rule. The granting of privileges to selected inmates immediately separated them from their comrades and sowed distrust. The in-

mates became so distrustful of each other that it was virtually impossible to organise any form of resistance, although the politicals tended to stick together, cemented by their abhorrence of the Nazi system in general and hatred of the SS in particular.

The Camp Commandant, whose office lay outside the Protective Custody Camp, commanded the camp staff and a guard detachment of about 120 men. His principal deputy was the Commander of the Protective Custody Camp (Schutzhaftlagerfuehrer) whose office was in the Jourhaus. His deputies were the SS NCOs in charge of the blocks (Blockfuehrer) and the others responsible for the running of the various services and offices in the camp. These were the only SS personnel allowed inside the camp perimeter.

The guard detachment had its own commander and lived in barracks outside the camp. The camp commander requested personnel to man the watch-towers and guard outside working details from the detachment commander. At Dachau the original guard company became a battalion in 1936 and was removed from the control of the camp commandant. On July 1, 1937, the battalion became a regiment (SS-Totenkopfstandarte 1 'Ooberbayern') under the command of SS-Obersturmbannfuehrer Max Simon. It was organised as a standard German infantry regiment but, since service in it did not count as military service, its 1,473 officers and men had either completed their military service or had yet to do it.

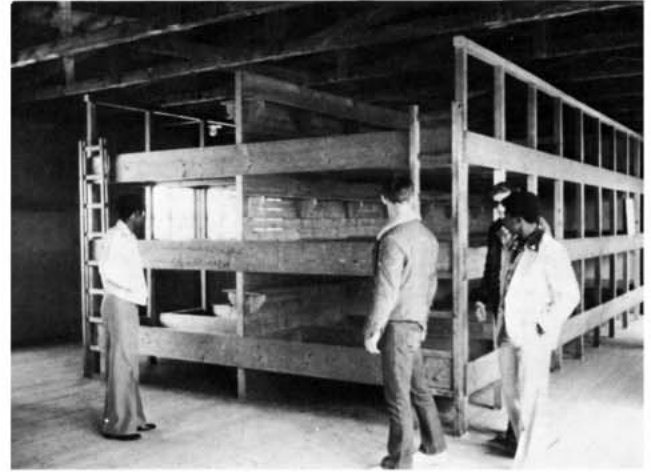
Although individual acts of brutality were officially forbidden, there were many ways in

The Lagerstrasse — then and now. Above as it appeared at the end of the rebuilding programme and below with the Roman Catholic Todesangst Christi Chapel, built in 1960, obscuring the watch tower. Protestant and Jewish memorial temples stand to the left and right. The position of each barrack hut is outlined in stone.

which a guard could make an inmate's life hell on earth. Minute attention to camp regulations, slaps, punches and kicks accompanied by foul language all led to prisoners living in a state of high nervous tension. This was aggravated by long hours, poor food, little or no news from home and an apparently endless sentence because prisoners never knew when they would be released. Barbaric behaviour was also not limited to SS personnel because privileged prisoners were also capable of brutality towards their fellows.

In 1938 Germany began her series of territorial aggrandisements which were to lead to war. Austria and the Sudetenland were well stocked with what Germany considered to be racial and ideological enemies and so the prisoner population of Dachau increased rapidly. Then, in November 1938, came the 'Crystal Night' pogrom and, for the first time, a large number of German Jews from Bavaria were rounded-up and dispatched to Dachau. They were lucky and did not stay long once they had undertaken to emigrate and had signed away their property in Germany. Their release and emigration was to lead to a spate of dramatic revelations about Hitler's concentration camps in the foreign press.





On September 24, 1939 Dachau Concentration Camp was cleared of inmates and became a military camp in which the SS 'Totenkopf' Division was formed. The division's first commander knew Dachau well because it was the former commandant Theodor Eicke. The SS 'Totenkopf' Division was formed from SS members liable for military service, SS men from the armed SS units (SS-Verfügungstruppe) and, significantly, men from the five pre-war SS Death's Head Regiments who were considered too good to waste on guarding concentration camps. This division, permeated with Eicke's brutal philosophy, was to earn an unenviable reputation first in France (where it was responsible for the massacre of British prisoners-of-war) and later in the Soviet Union where it fought ruthlessly throughout the war.

The new guard units were placed under the jurisdiction of the camp commandant and thus became members of the concentration camp staff. They comprised mainly of elderly SS reservists and their attitude and behaviour towards the concentration camp inmates is difficult to classify. They had not been subjected to Eicke's harsh schooling although, as SS men, they would have received their fair share of SS indoctrination. There continued to be sadists and unimaginative roughs amongst their ranks but others, when unobserved by their comrades, showed sympathy and understanding towards their charges. Meanwhile the camp commandant and his staff remained undisturbed, their experience and special skills sparing them the danger and discomfort of active service at the front.

Before the war prisoners had usually arrived at Dachau by car or train, either singly or in small groups but, on September 9, 1939, the first train-load of 'Transport' of 630 Czechs arrived at Dachau. From then on there were regular arrivals both in summer and winter. In cold weather prisoners in cattle trucks or goods waggons often froze to death while in summer they died of thirst. Those that survived had to be nursed back to health before they could be put to work although many never recovered.

In January 1941 Himmler agreed to the classification of concentration camps into three categories. This enabled the SS to assign certain types of prisoners to a particular camp. Dachau was given category Ia which meant that conditions were to be less harsh than in other camps and prisoners who were considered redeemable were to be employed in light work only. Nevertheless conditions in Dachau did not depend upon administrative niceties but on the war. While Germany was victorious prisoners had to endure the ever-increasing arrogance of the guards and growing overcrowding as prisoners from the newly-conquered territories arrived in their thousands. German defeats meant reduction

of rations and, towards the end of the war, even more overcrowding due to the evacuation of camps in Poland and elsewhere.

Although lacking the smells and oppressive atmosphere of the original dormitories (photo left), these reconstructions (photo right) give the present-day tourist some indication of the cramped conditions which then prevailed.

of rations and, towards the end of the war, even more overcrowding due to the evacuation of camps in Poland and elsewhere.

The other significant factor in a prisoners' existence was the character of the camp commandant. From September 1942 it was SS-Obersturmbannführer Weiss. He replaced the idle and corrupt Piorkowski at a time when Dachau was assuming tremendous importance in the SS's continued ability to wage World War. Weiss was intelligent enough to realise that one could not expect a worthwhile output from prisoners suffering from malnutrition and on the verge of nervous exhaustion. Under his regime attempts were made to improve conditions and guards were kept on a tighter rein so that prisoners did not go in the perpetual fear of being tormented. Those inmates who possessed particularly valuable skills or who had succeeded in obtaining special privileges received better rations, better clothing and even better housing. Their robust appearance contrasted glaringly with the emaciated, diseased bodies to be found in the camp hospital.

From 1940 onwards the German arms industry began to replace its workers called-up for military service by using concentration camp inmates and increasing numbers worked outside the camp in work details (Kommandos). Conditions in factories and on construction sites varied from bad to diabolical. Prisoners worked all hours in all

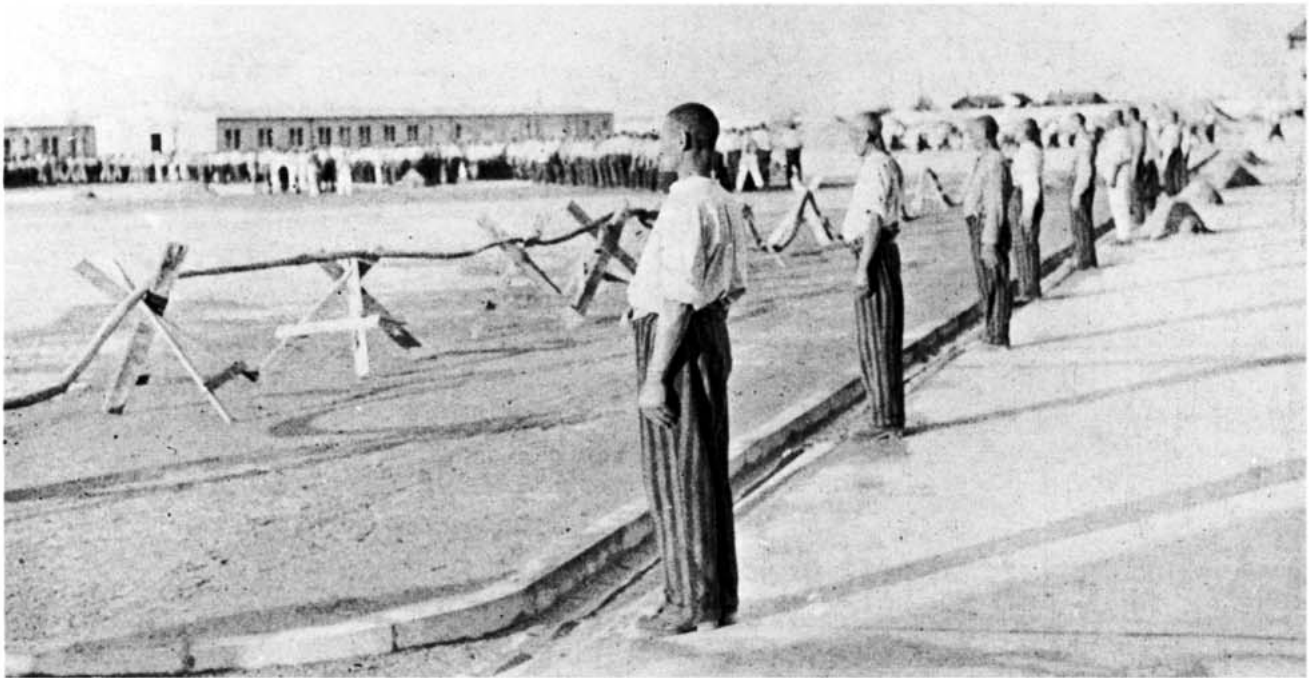
weathers and received meagre rations and inadequate shelter. They were also at the mercy of the guards who behaved as they saw fit since they were often free from supervision. These wartime guards were far removed from Eicke's arrogant young Death's Head troopers. The elderly SS reservists, called-up in September 1939, had been gradually pensioned off and replaced by Waffen-SS men unfit for active service. Many of them were ethnic-Germans from Romania and Hungary.

Inmates continued to die at Dachau from a variety of causes — beatings, overwork, illness and old-age — but as far as is known the first official execution took place on November 11, 1940 when fifty-five Polish intellectuals were shot. There are no further recorded instances of execution until February 1944 when a group of Red Army officers were shot by firing squad. The last recorded shooting took place on April 19, 1945 and this time the victims were four French and eleven Czech officers. These executions either took place near the crematorium or in an SS rifle range at Herbertshausen not far from Dachau.

Prisoners were also executed or 'shot while trying to escape'. Others considered simple, or just too old or infirm to work were dispatched to the SS euthanasia centre at Schloss Hartheim near Linz. There are no detailed records of exactly how many men died in Dachau since the SS destroyed most of their files before the end of the war.



Reichsführer Himmler visits Dachau, February 1941. L-R: Head of SS Administrative Office, Oswald Pohl (responsible for concentration camps); Head of Dutch National Socialists, Anton Mussert; Himmler and SS-Sturmabführer Hans Piorkowski.



The three good 'B's have already been described but there were also another 'three Bs'. These were the 'Bock', 'Baum' and 'Bunker'. The 'Bock' (now in the camp museum) was a slatted wooden bench to which prisoners were strapped before receiving up to thirty strokes of a bull-whip. Then in 1936 a new form of punishment was introduced. Prisoners found guilty of quite minor infractions of camp rules were suspended by their wrists, which had been tied behind their back, with their feet clear of the ground from the 'Baum'. This excruciating torture could last for about two hours and it would take a man many days to recover the use of his arms. The 'Bunker' or punishment block consisted of cells for solitary confinement in which prisoners could spend up to forty-two days or even longer. The ultimate refinement was the 'Strek Bunker' which had been specially constructed so that a man incarcerated there could neither stand up or lie down in comfort. The SS guards who ran the Bunker were specially chosen for their brutality.

In the same block, side by side with the punishment cells, were another group of cells

Above: Prisoners undergoing the standing punishment which took place all the year round in all weathers. Our comparison photo of the Appellplatz (bottom) shows one of the two reconstructed huts. The kerbstone has been removed.

in which a number of important prisoners were kept in comparative comfort.

And so the dreary grind continued. Some days it was a little better — no slaps or insults, a little more solid matter in the watery soup, but on other days it was worse. At night, as he tried to sleep in his hard and overcrowded bunk, a prisoner could never tell what tomorrow would bring. He was a slave in a huge factory making uniforms for the soldiers who fought in the defence of the system which enslaved him while his fellows repaired weapons which would be used to kill those who sought to liberate him. In this factory one neither clocked-in nor rushed for the factory gates when the siren went at the end of a day's work. This factory had a chimney but it did not belch out the smokey effluent of some industrial process but the acrid and nauseous smoke from cremated human bodies.

However, isolated from the outside world as they were, the inmates began to sense that the

war was coming to an end. At the end of 1944, brutal SS guards suddenly tried, somewhat awkwardly, to be friendly — 'after all, inmates are also human beings'. Discipline slackened, church services began to be held and the inmates' morale soared as Allied aircraft buzzed the camp.

Following the capture of Buchenwald concentration camp, Hitler ordered Himmler not to allow another camp to fall into Allied hands intact. Leading Nazis in Bavaria were in favour of bombing the camp from the air but, at that late stage of the war, the Germans did not have the means to carry out such an operation even if they could find somebody to accept responsibility for authorising such a monstrous crime. In Dachau, rumours were rife that the SS intended to shoot all the inmates in the camp before it was over-run. In practical terms, the choice was simple: either to surrender the camp intact to the Allies or to evacuate it.





On April 28, 1945, fifteen inmates representing twelve different nations formed themselves into an International Committee. The main task of this committee was to endeavour to provide leadership and maintain discipline and services if the SS abandoned the camp and to prevent any SS attempts to destroy the camp and its inmates. The few remaining guards were replaced by a company of Waffen-SS soldiers from the SS Camp, under the command of SS-Obersturmfuehrer H. Skodzinsky, and that evening the Swastika flags were lowered and white ones run up.

The following day, April 29, 1945, the inmates were at fever pitch with excitement. Gunfire could be heard in the distance and both prisoners and guards realised that American forces were closing on the camp. At 3.15 p.m. jeeps from the 1st Battalion, 157th Regiment, 45th 'Thunderbird' Division roared up to the Jourhaus gate. As a GI stepped out, machine gun fire came from the centre watch-tower to his left although this had been flying a white flag since morning. A

Above: Inmates massing on the Appellplatz before the Jourhaus on liberation day, April 29, 1945. Below: Thirty-four years later, unchanged except for the taller trees, the parade ground is silent as if brooding on former memories.



The Jourhaus looking from the SS Camp through the gate to the compound. Today a two metre-high pre-cast concrete fence blocks off the camp from the police barracks — this is the best



comparison photo possible with 'backs to the wall'. The canal which lies along the western edge of the compound runs under the bridge in front of the gateway.

tank was called forward and, with a few bursts, silenced the tower and the body of an SS guard tumbled to the ground.

One of the Dachau inmates was the Belgian hero Albert Guerisse (also known as Patrick O'Leary) and he later described what happened next:

'I ascertain that the Americans are now masters of the situation. I go toward the officer who has come down from the tank, introduce myself and he embraces me. He is a major. His uniform is dusty, his shirt, open almost to the navel, is filthy, soaked with sweat, his helmet is on crooked, he is unshaven and his cigarette dangles from the left corner of his lip.

'At this point, the young Teutonic lieutenant, Heinrich Skodzinsky, emerges from the guard post and comes to attention before the American officer. The German is blond, handsome, perfumed, his boots glistening, his uniform well-tailored. He reports, as if he were on the military parade grounds near the Unter den Linden during an exercise, then very properly raising his arm he salutes with a very respectful "Heil Hitler!" and clicks his heels.

'"I hereby turn over to you the concentration camp of Dachau, 30,000 residents, 2,340 sick, 27,000 on the outside, 560 garrison troops."

'Am I dreaming? It seems that I can see before me the striking contrast of a beast and a god. Only that the Boche is the one who looks divine.

'The American major does not return the salute. He hesitates for a moment, as if he were trying to make sure that he is remembering the adequate words. Then, he spits into the face of the German,

'*"Du Schweinhund!"*

'And then, "Sit down there!" — pointing to the rear seat of one of the jeeps which in the meantime have driven in.'

'The major turns to me and hands me an automatic rifle.

'"Come with me"



Two GIs of the first Battalion, 157th Infantry Regiment of the 45th 'Thunderbird' Division, are assisted by a liberated prisoner in recovering the body of one of the SS guards from the canal beneath watch-tower B.

'But I no longer had the strength to move.

'"No, I stay here —"

'The major gave an order, the jeep with the young German officer in it went outside the camp again. A few minutes went by, my comrades had not yet dared to come out of their barracks, for at that distance they could not tell the outcome of the negotiations between the American officer and the SS men. Then I hear several shots.

'"The bastard is dead" the American major says to me.

'He gives some orders, transmitted to the

radiomen in the jeeps, and more officers start arriving, newspapermen, little trucks. Now the prisoners have understood, they jump on the Americans, embrace them, kiss their feet, their hands; the liberation is on.'

Another description of the liberation was given by Turkish newspaper correspondent, Nerin E. Gun, who had been imprisoned in Dachau for his reports on the Warsaw ghetto:

'The detachment under the command of the American major had not come directly to the Jourhaus', he later wrote in his book *The Day of the Americans*. 'It had made a detour



Left: Bodies of the guards beneath the tower — the centre one in the western perimeter. Right: Today undergrowth nearly touches



across the canal and prevents an exact comparison. A door has now been cut in the tower for direct access from the compound.



Above: Tech/4 Arland B. Musser of the Signal Corps photographs Company I of the 3rd Battalion approaching the SS Camp from the north. **Below:** Denied access to the police barracks, this is where the old railway line enters the perimeter.

by way of the marshalling yard, where the convoys of deportees normally arrived and departed. There they found some fifty-odd cattle cars parked on the tracks. The cars were not empty.

'The train was full of corpses, piled one on the other, 2,310 of them, to be exact. The train had come from Birkenau and the dead were Hungarian and Polish Jews, children among them. Their journey had lasted perhaps thirty or forty days. They had died of hunger, of thirst, of suffocation, of being crushed, or of being beaten by the guards. There were even evidences of cannibalism. They were all practically dead when they arrived at Dachau Station. The SS men did not take the trouble to unload them. They simply decided to stand guard and shoot down any with enough strength left to emerge from the cattle cars. The corpses were strewn everywhere — on the rails, the steps, the platforms.

'“I never saw anything like it in my life,” said Lieutenant Harold Mayer. “Every one of my men became raving mad. We turned off toward the east, going around the compound, without even taking the trouble to reconnoiter first. We were out to avenge them.”

'“Now I know what we're fighting for,” exclaimed Corporal Eagle. “We can't live in the same world with them. They are nothing but animals. They must be destroyed.”



A photographer steps from one of the wagons after recording the horrific scenes within. The train can be seen standing amongst the trees in the photo at the top of the page.





'In this very same station, at the very same time, German men and women, peasants or burghers from the town of Dachau, were in the process of looting the depot and the neighbouring buildings. Their children were with them. The children played within touch of the corpses while their parents piled their loot up on little carts or on their bicycles, totally indifferent to the dead on the train and to the nauseating stench of rotting flesh.

'The ire of the men of the First Battalion, 157th Regiment, was to mount even higher as they got closer to the Lager of the deportees. The dead were everywhere — in the ditches, along the side streets, in the garden before a small building with chimneys — and there was a huge mountain of corpses inside the yard of this building, which they now understood to be the crematorium. And finally there was the ultimate horror — the infernal sight of those thousands and thousands of living skeletons, screaming like banshees, on the other side of the placid poplars.

'When some of the SS men on the watch-towers started to shoot into the mobs of prisoners, the Americans threw all caution to the winds. They opened fire on the towers with healthy salvos. The SS men promptly came down the ladders, their hands reaching high. But now the American GI saw red. He shot the Germans down with a telling blast and to make doubly sure sent a final shot into their fallen bodies. Then the hunt started for any other Germans in SS uniform. Within a quarter of an hour,' wrote Gun, 'there was not a single one of the Hitler henchmen alive within the camp.'

The camp rapidly took on the look of a carnival as crudely-made national flags were unfurled and began to flutter gaily over the camp. The Americans found Dachau in a horrible state. While the bulk of the inmates were lean and hungry but otherwise in reasonable condition, other huts were crammed with ill and dying prisoners suffering from tuberculosis and typhus.

The list compiled by the International Committee on April 26, 1945 showed 67,665 inmates, while the first American census showed that they had liberated 31,432 inmates. It was only natural that as soon as the initial euphoria had worn off, the prisoners should try and seek revenge on the SS guards and the SS families and property in and around the camp and the GIs had to restore order by shooting over the heads of the excited mass. The International Committee and its

Above: It is difficult to establish exactly what is taking place in this photo also taken by T/4 Musser. The official caption states: 'Soldiers order SS men to come forward after one of their number tried to escape from the camp after it was liberated. Men on the ground feign death by falling as the guards fired a volley at the fleeing SS Men'. (Note that a .30 machine gun is hidden by the kneeling soldier.) The picture below from Nerin Gun's book seems more explicit and is captioned, 'An SS guard, knocked to the ground, is insulted by the prisoners'. The bodies seem to be unmoved in the background. We could not obtain comparisons of this location.



'police force' forbade prisoners from leaving the compound and attempted to prevent prisoners from settling private grievances.

Meanwhile the Americans began the most important task which was to save the lives of the sick and to prevent the spread of disease by cleaning up the camp and arranging for the burial of the piles of corpses which they found outside the Revier (medical) huts and the crematorium. However, in spite of every effort, the sick continued to die and, between the liberation of the camp and June 16, 1945, a further 2,466 deaths were recorded.

Over the next few days a strange transfer took place. After medical checks and inoculations, inmates were given clean clothing from the vast stocks from the SS clothing works (SS-Bekleidungs-lager) and transferred to the SS barracks. The 4,000 sick were placed under proper medical care and, as a result, the mortality rate dropped rapidly. At the same time the former prisoners were organised in national groups and prepared for repatriation. The quarantine which was imposed on the camp on liberation was finally lifted on May 12, 1945.



Chattering German schoolchildren visit the crematorium, preserved in every detail.



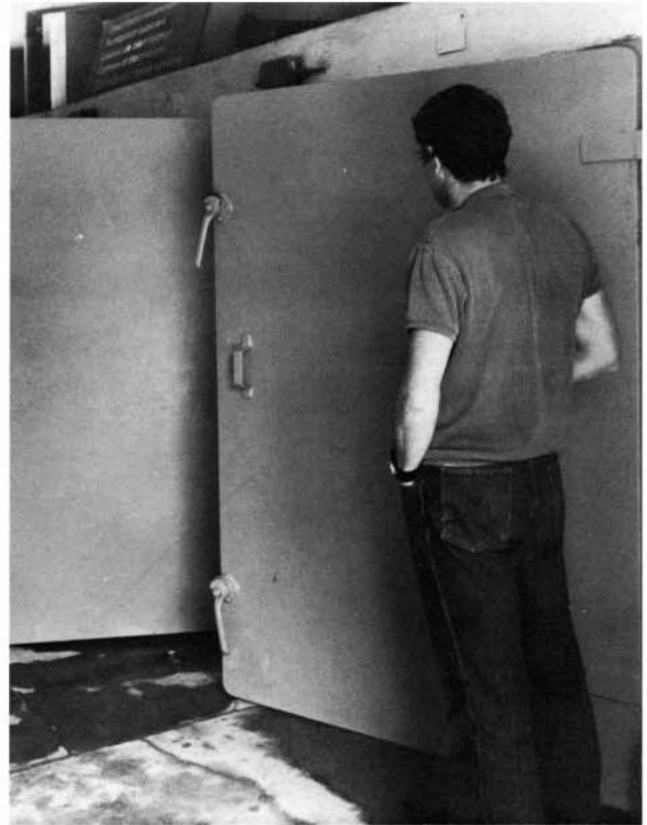
The paradox of a bird-table and bodies outside the crematorium built by the prisoners in 1942. This picture and the one at the top of the page taken by Nerin Gun.



In the crematorium memorial garden. The statue representing the unknown prisoner.



Above left: Although this picture, taken on April 30 by T/4 Sidney Blau, is captioned as the gas chambers being examined by a Seventh Army soldier, they are in fact the decontamination rooms



for the clothing removed from the dead located at the extreme western end of the crematorium building (on the left in the photo on opposite page). *Above right:* The same door today.



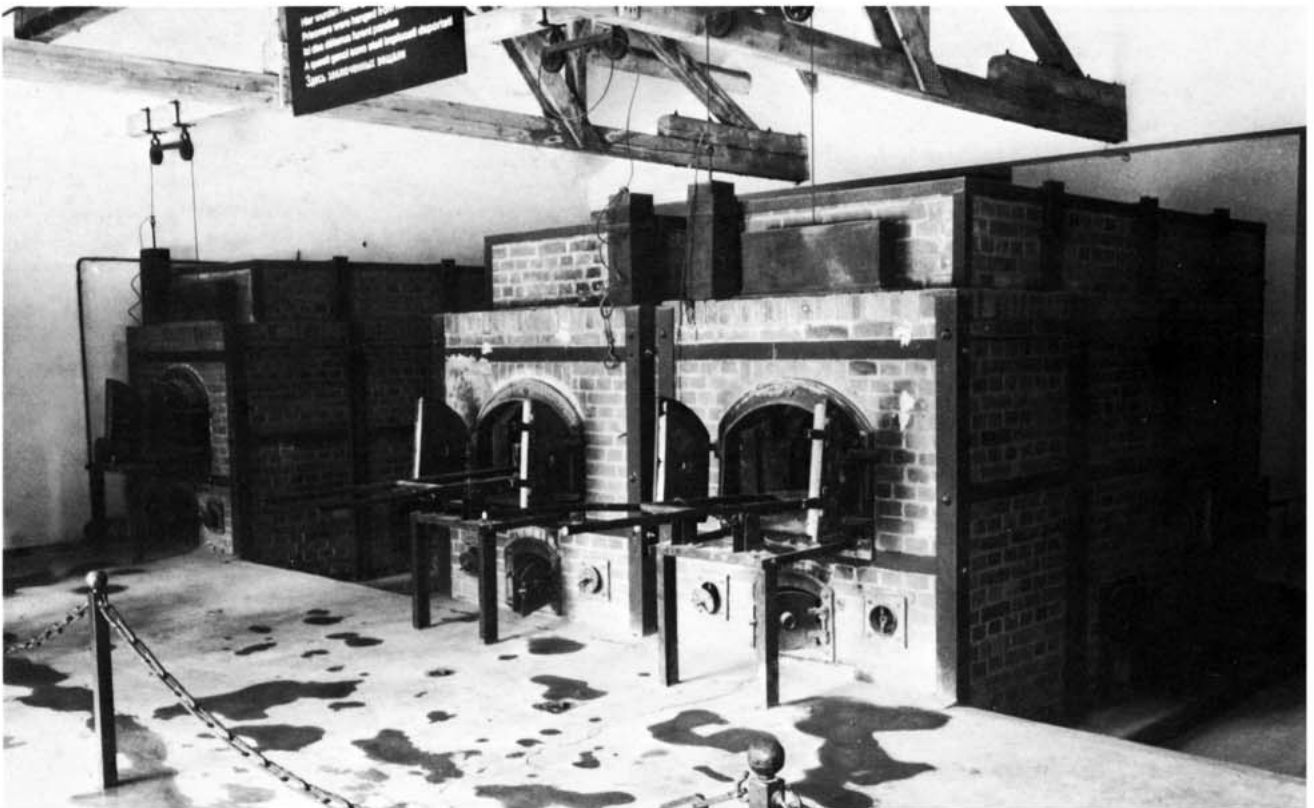
The actual gas chamber is examined by medical corpsmen of the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division. It was disguised as a shower room and the painted inscription 'Brausebad' remains above the entrance



door (photo centre right). Today the notices and associated literature in Dachau state that the room (above right) was never used for its intended purpose.



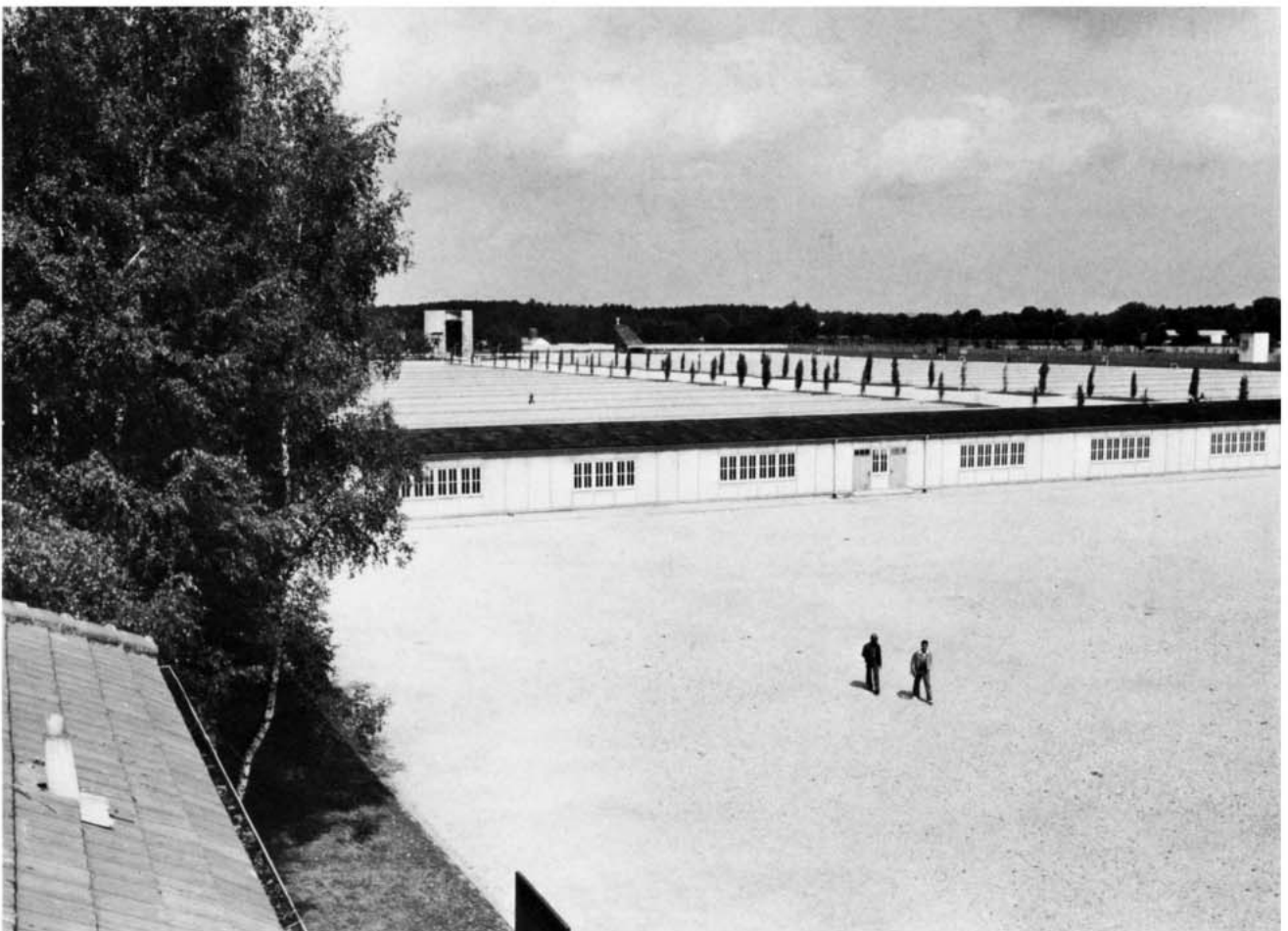
Left: Corpses awaiting cremation were piled in the room beside the ovens and this is how the Americans found it on April 29. Above: When he revisited the camp in 1959, Nerin Gun found the same room occupied by a Polish lady as her only home. Today it is clean, bright and airy.



Left: The nameless ones. Some 200 bodies were found beside the infirmary huts (the first two on the eastern side of the compound). They were transported in the 'Moorexpress' cart to be buried in



mass graves on the nearby Leitenberg hill. Right: The huge expanse of the razed camp area gives the casual tourist little idea of what conditions were really like.



The prisoners' former camp now became an SS compound where the Americans collected together all the SS men they had captured as well as important prisoners who were to participate in the war crimes trials which were then being prepared. As a consequence the Bunker did not fall into disuse but now held such distinguished prisoners as former German field-marschals until the International Red Cross interceded on their behalf.

On November 15, 1945 the first trial of SS men began at Dachau in one of the buildings in the former SS camp. The forty-two defendants included the last commandant, SS-Obersturmbannführer Weiss and four SS and one civilian doctor charged with carrying out inhuman experiments on inmates. Judgement was given on December 14, 1945 resulting in thirty-six sentences of death. Other trials were held at Dachau including the controversial Malmedy trial. However it seems that the brutal atmosphere of Dachau rubbed off on the Americans for, although the former Waffen-SS men were found guilty and sentenced to death, their sentences were never carried out because of the maltreatment they had received at the hands of the American guards.

Equally distasteful was the forceable repatriation of the 339 Soviet citizens who had served in the German forces and who were being held in Dachau. On January 19, 1946,



Above: The main gate leading into the SS complex. The building on the left was used by the Central Construction Direction of Waffen SS and Police.



as part of the controversial 'Operation Keelhaul', some 500 American and Polish troops descended on the huts occupied by the Russians and dragged them out to the waiting lorries. Many tried to kill themselves and some succeeded as they desperately resisted all attempts to get them to move. Finally the Americans and Poles resorted to tear-gas.

In June 1947, the former concentration camp was handed over to the German Refugee Administration. At this time there was a critical shortage of housing in Germany and many thousands of displaced persons had to be housed in former camps. These displaced persons lived in makeshift accommodation until September 1949 when the former concentration camp was cleared of SS men and the other German prisoners-of-war and turned into a DP camp. The huts were converted into family-sized units, given a fresh coat of paint, and used as temporary accommodation until permanent homes could be found for these tragic people. By June 1952 there were still 1,845 DPs at Dachau including 500 children who attended the Volksschule established inside the camp. Work was found for the DPs in a leather works set-up in the former concentration camp kitchens while a sock factory was established in another building on what used to be the Plantage.

Above: Outer checkpoint to the SS camp, now under American tenure. Note that the old gateway and eagle beside the building in the background had already been demolished when this picture was taken in December 1948 (Associated Press). **Below:** We were refused permission to take photographs of the old guardhouse today.



As the DPs were gradually moved out, the camp fell into disrepair which was accelerated by people taking timber for firewood and removing anything which could be used as building materials. As a result, the huts became so dilapidated and unsightly that they were burnt to the ground.

A Catholic Chapel had already been built in one of the watch-towers and, on September 11, 1956, one of the first of many memorials was inaugurated and blessed by religious delegates from twenty-one countries.

While the fabric of the camp crumbled, survivors, who had formed the Dachau Concentration Camp International Committee, entered into negotiations with the Bavarian Government with a view to preserving what was left of the camp and creating a permanent memorial museum on the site. However some of the buildings had been sold off and others, such as the Bunker, were still being used by the American Army.

The Administrative Block at the south end of the compound had become a footwear factory and the labour force, mainly imported 'Guest Workers', were housed in the attic and one night a fire started which almost completely gutted the huge building. Meanwhile other huts had been sold off to private concerns for use as factories while some of the adjoining land was used for housing.

There was one little industry which continued to function in the Dachau camp from the very beginning until the 1970s. This was the cobbler's shop which was housed in the west wing of the Administration Block. Originally the shop had been set up so that inmates could repair the footwear of their fellow prisoners but, since many of the cobblers were highly skilled, they also made boots and shoes for the SS staff and their families. Following the liberation, the shop had been taken over by German military cobblers who repaired the footwear of the German soldiers and SS men held in the camp. Thereafter it lay vacant until a private firm leased it and entered into a contract with the US forces to repair American military footwear for as long as the Americans remained there.

In addition to the practical problems of regaining ownership of the complete complex, there were severe reservations on the part of the local populace who wanted the whole site levelled and all trace of the camp erased. Some had even tried to have the name of the town changed because of its association with the past, and Dachau is still one of the few German towns that has not found a twin in England or France. Gradually the Dachau Committee got its own way and the Bavarian Administration for Castles, Gardens and



'All personnel check your weapons at the gate before entering compound' reads a notice on the Jourhaus, now under new management (Black Star).

Lakes assumed responsibility for creating the Memorial Museum and, after vast expenditure, the museum was officially opened in May 1965.

Meanwhile the SS camp had become an American Army establishment and all National Socialist and SS symbols were removed including the main arched gateway which was surmounted by a bronze eagle and Swastika. In 1972 Bavaria played host to the Olympic Games and one of the great problems faced by the West German Government was that of security. Since the former concentration camp lay not far from the site of the Games, the Federal Government entered into negotiations with the US military authorities which resulted in the handing back of the former SS Camp to the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior for use as a Police Barracks. As the American Army had maintained a military prison at Dachau, in which a number of US soldiers who had deserted or refused to serve in Vietnam were held, the Federal Government was obliged to build the Americans another detention centre elsewhere.

Since 1972 the Bavarian Interior Ministry has spent large sums of money in refurbishing the permanent buildings, such as the former SS barracks and officers' quarters. Many of the old factory sheds and temporary buildings

have since been demolished and the factory huts, which formed the pre-1937 concentration camp, were destroyed during the winter of 1978-79. Although American forces have now completely left the camp, they still maintain a recreational area in the parkland to the north-west which contains a swimming pool, golf course and a fish-stocked lake; facilities originally built by Himmler so that his subordinates could rest from their demanding duties.

The After the Battle team arrived in Munich on August 27, 1979. Our first call was to the Police Praesidium in the Odeonsplatz to find out if our written application to take photographs in the former SS Camp (which is now used by the 4th Battalion of the Bavarian Bereitschaftspolizei) had been granted. The young official of the Press Office was concerned that we had not received a reply to our letter, but stated that permission could not be granted on security grounds. We explained in detail our requirements and told him that we were surprised at their refusal on grounds of security because we had encountered no difficulty in obtaining an up-to-date aerial photograph of the whole Dachau complex.

In the afternoon we drove to Dachau and went on a quick recce to establish the lie of the

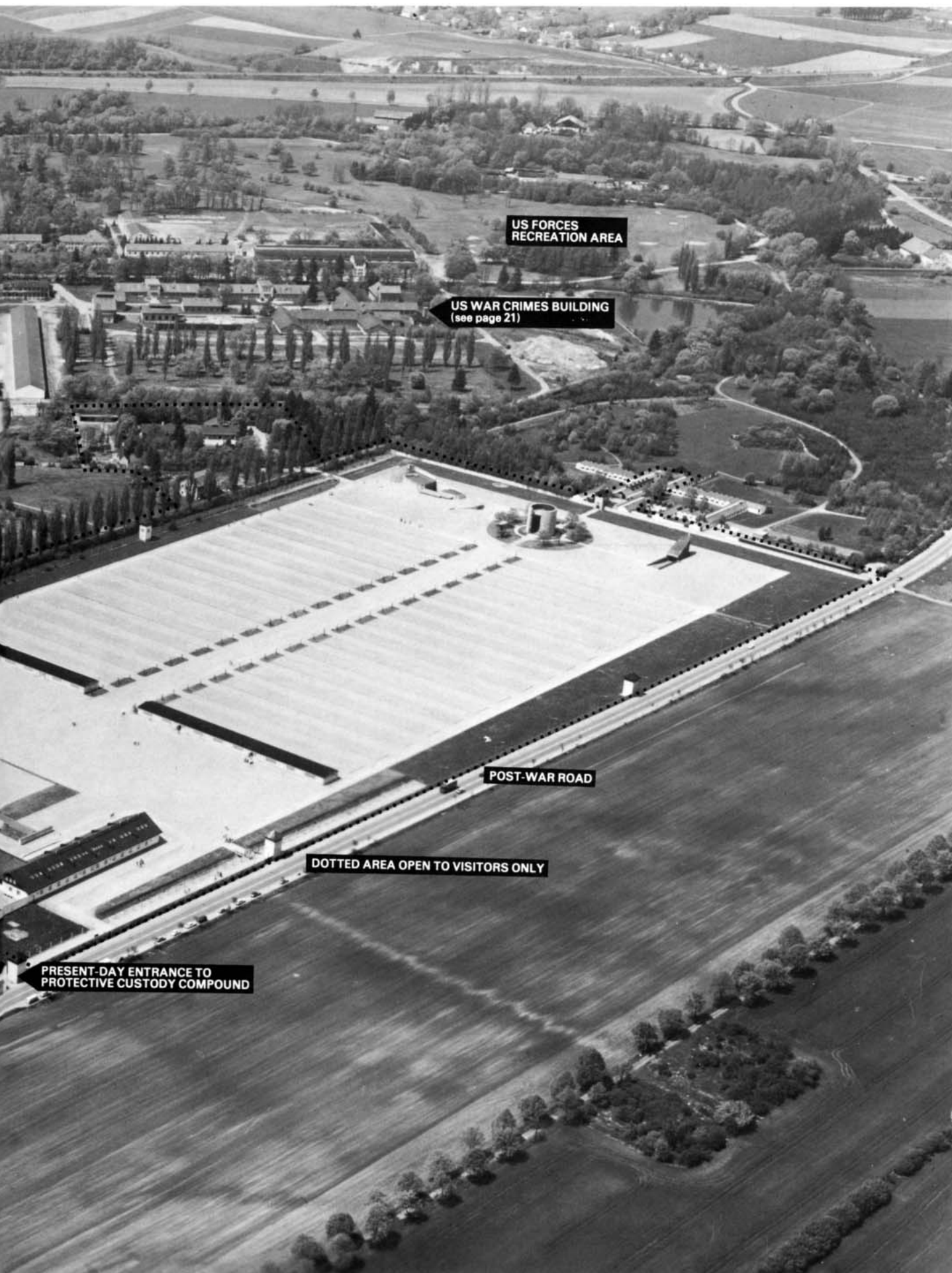


Left: The war crimes courthouse seen here on the morning of the pronouncement of sentences on the seventy-three Malmédy massacre defendants — July 16, 1946. We were refused permission to take this comparison and were even told the building



no longer existed. (Its position is indicated on our aerial photograph on pages 22-23 taken in May 1978.) Right: Former Dachau commandant Martin Weiss (September 1942-May 1945) at his trial held in his own camp on November 29, 1945.





US FORCES
RECREATION AREA

US WAR CRIMES BUILDING
(see page 21)

POST-WAR ROAD

DOTTED AREA OPEN TO VISITORS ONLY

PRESENT-DAY ENTRANCE TO
PROTECTIVE CUSTODY COMPOUND



Above: The Appellplatz photographed from the observation platform of the Jourhaus. The recently-released prisoners are

celebrating the Polish Day of Liberation. *Below:* We were allowed in the now-empty Jourhaus by the museum administration.



Looking the opposite direction from the platform provides the best view of the police barracks and shows how the former road to the compound has been sealed off. Piles of rubble are all that remain of the original factory buildings.



The interior of the Jourhaus is in reasonable state of repair although not open to the public. The rooms are now all empty although a desk in which prisoners' records were kept can now be seen in the museum.

land. We drove along the road that flanks the eastern side of the former Protective Custody Compound. During the war this had been a farm track and the only person allowed to use it, apart from the SS, was the local miller who had a special pass. Eventually we found our way to what turned out to be the American recreational area beside the north-western corner of the complex. This area is separated from the former SS Camp by a high barbed-wire fence patrolled by green-uniformed policemen carrying walkie-talkie radios and armed with sub-machine guns. We parked the car by a pond and walked along the fence trying to pin-point the various buildings which we could see on the aerial shot taken by the Americans in April 1945. At that moment a watchman rode up on a moped and wanted to know what we were doing. We explained and he seemed satisfied but he could not, or would not, tell us anything about the former SS camp. Thus ended our first attempt to breach the security barrier.

The following day we drove straight to the camp and parked our rented car (with German number plates) in the visitor's car park. The newly constructed entrance to the Protective Custody Compound, which now forms the Memorial Museum, is in the south-east corner. As one enters the Compound the long low building which once housed the individual cells and the 'dog kennels' lay on our left. Then, as we rounded the corner of the former Administrative Block, we were immediately struck by the vast scale of this camp. Our author, Andrew Mollo, although on his second visit, described his feelings as being enveloped in an almost oppressive silence.

Our first task was to try and match up the photos of the original camp. When one carefully studies the aerial views reproduced here, it is possible to see that the Protective Custody Camp remains, in outline, much as it used to be with the outside perimeter fence (re-barbed-wired and no longer electrified) and the watch-towers. A few new gateways have been formed and the concrete fence which divides the concentration camp from the former SS camp was built after the war. The principal permanent buildings, the Bunker, Administrative Block, and Jourhaus have all been faithfully restored. Of the original thirty-four huts, only two have been re-built, while positions of the others are indicated by the concrete outline of their original foundations. However study of photographs of the original huts shows that the reconstructions are not exactly the same and that they vary in a number of details.

At the northern end of the compound, where the Plantage was formerly laid out, stand three memorials and there is another in front of the administrative block where a number of huts stood during the war.

We visited the Jourhaus and tried to match photographs of this building as the Americans found it in April 1945. This is difficult because the new concrete wall runs only a few yards to the west of the building on the far side of the canal. Later we were kindly given permission to enter the Jourhaus and take photographs from the top of the wooden watch-tower where, in April 1945, American photographers took panoramic views of the camp. The huge wrought-iron gates of the Jourhaus appeared to have remained intact, but we were told later that the original 'Arbeit Macht Frei' had been cut out by the Americans and that the present-day wording is a replacement.

Next we matched up the American photographs of watch-tower B on the west side of the camp showing the bodies of the Waffen-SS men who had been shot when the camp was liberated. Some of the bodies had fallen or been thrown into the canal and, to prevent the water becoming polluted, American soldiers and camp police had fished them out with bill hooks. We have tried to obtain confirmation



Before visiting Dachau we thought the picture above would make an ideal comparison. We discovered it was also taken from the Jourhaus but from a window in the end of the building looking south. Unfortunately the anti-escape ditch and fence has been obliterated in this area and heavy foliage spoils the rest of the view. (Never mind, you cannot win them all — at least the courting couple enjoyed it!)



of the number and units of the SS men killed in Dachau during the liberation of the camp from official West German sources but, at the time of going to press, have not received any reply. A number of sources state that these Waffen-SS men were from the 'Wiking' Division.

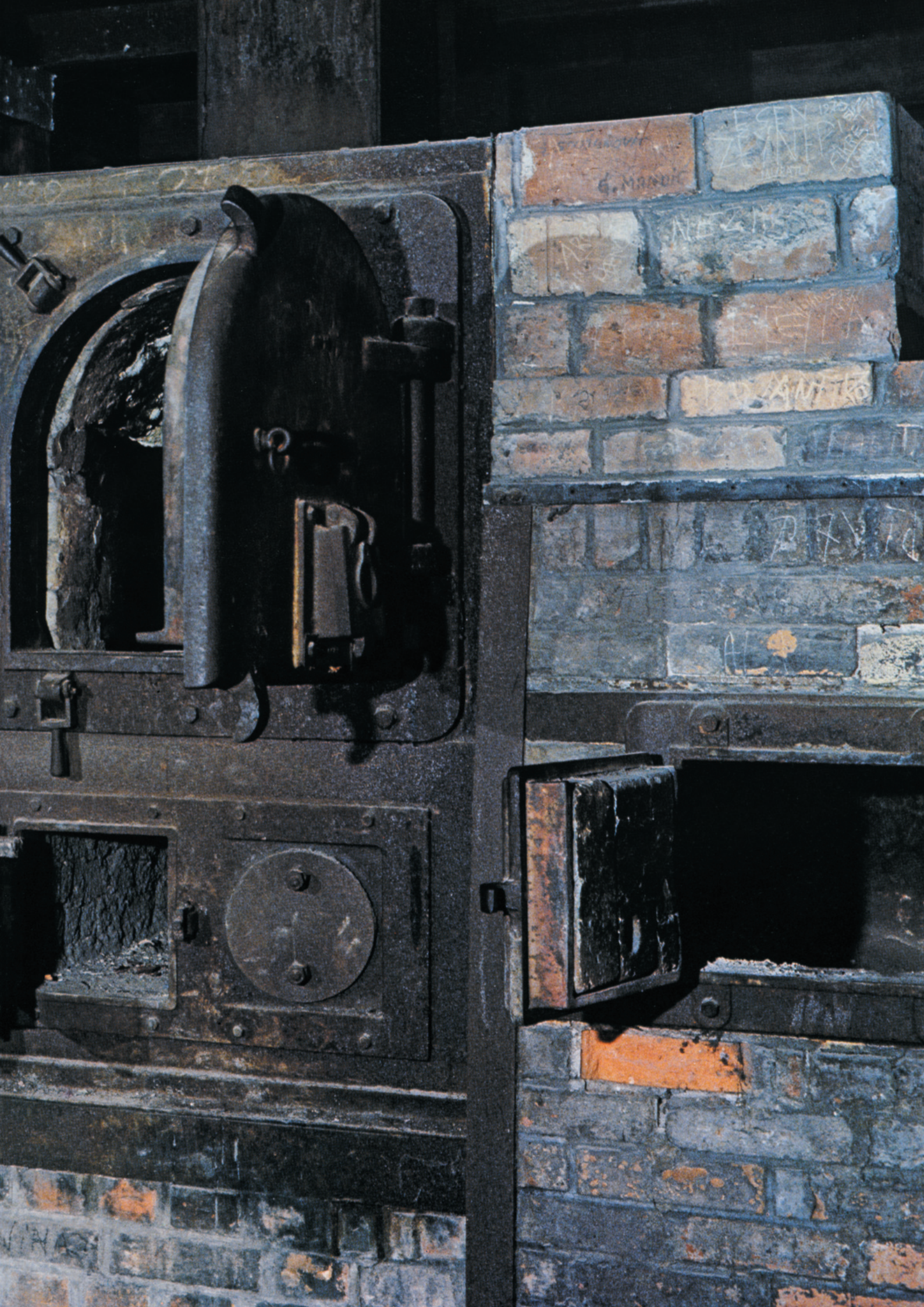
The two reconstructed huts in the compound are divided into rooms with rows of three-tiered bunks. Tables and stools and cupboards in which prisoners kept their few personal belongings have all been reconstructed with reasonable accuracy. The freshly-sawn pine from which they are made is now covered in the scribbled names of visitors from the four corners of the earth (over four million in the eleven years since the museum opened in May 1965). Even the ablutions are in the process of being re-built but it did not prove easy to trace the original style lavatories and large, round enamelled basins which

stood in the centre of the room and enabled ten men to wash at the same time.

The crematorium buildings lie outside the compound in the north-western corner screened by fir trees. 'Baracke X', as it was called, was built in 1942 to replace the small old crematorium which still stands nearby. In addition to the four ovens for the disposal of corpses, a gas chamber was also incorporated in the building. The official literature on sale in the museum shop states that the gas chamber was never used for its intended role but only as a shower room.

At the far end of the crematorium stands another line of oven-like chambers which were used to disinfect the clothing, which had been removed from the corpses, so that it could be safely returned to the clothing depot in the administrative block for re-issue. (American troops thought that these were also gas chambers). Outside the crematorium the site





of many executions by shooting now forms part of a beautifully maintained garden of remembrance.

The museum itself is housed inside the administrative block. The basis of the exhibition is huge photographic blow-ups and documents but woefully few original objects. The 'Bock' is there, as are some examples of prison clothing and the desk in which the SS kept the record cards of the inmates. There is also a cinema in which there is a continuous showing of a film about the camp.

Andrew Mollo had heard a lot about the English-speaking lady who is the director of the museum but, as luck would have it, she was away on holiday. However Frau Distel's assistant very kindly allowed us to have a quick look at their photographic collection to select some photographs for reproduction in this issue. All the members of the museum staff were most helpful and tried to do all they could to make our task as easy as possible which was in direct contrast to those we encountered during the next stage of our adventure.

We now left the Memorial Museum with the intention of trying once more to get inside the confines of the police barracks where we had several photographs to match up. First we returned to the American recreational zone because we wanted to try and get photographs of what we believed to be the war crimes trial building. The armed policemen were still on duty on the far side of the fence. Out of courtesy we went to the caretaker's hut by the side of the former SS swimming pool-come-fishing lake and asked his permission to take some photos and he nodded his approval in a disinterested sort of a way. Having taken a few shots, we drove back on the post-war road which runs down the east side of the camp past two groups of houses on the left of the road which were formerly SS married quarters. Back on the main road a green and white police car roared past us travelling in the opposite direction. A quick glance in the rear view mirror established that the car had performed a Kojak-style U-turn and was now speeding after us. Turning off the road into the gravelled track which leads into the Schafflik Cement Works, the police car overshot the track in which we had parked. It screeched to a halt, reversed rapidly and pulled up in front of us. Four policemen jumped out and approached us with caution. Andrew reached for his passport and got out of the car. One of the policemen asked in German what we were doing. In his best German Andrew explained our mission. The policeman asked if we had been told by the watchman that it was forbidden to take photographs and Andrew honestly replied that we had not. We showed him photos of Dachau in the old days and he gradually relaxed and became quite interested. While one of his subordinates took down the details of Andrew's passport, we asked him if it was possible to get inside the police barracks. He said that it was not up to him since he belonged to a different branch of the police but we could always go to the main gate and ask.

Bold as brass we therefore drove up to the guard house and asked to see the adjutant. After surrendering our passports we were told that two of us could drive to the headquarters building. Now at last we were inside and could drive down the 'Street of Concentration Camp Victims' (formerly the 'Street of the SS'). On our left were a number of two-storey detached buildings in a sort of Bavarian rococo-style and finished in shades of light blue and pink while, on the right, there appeared to be a number of newly-built blocks of flats. At the end of the road we turned left onto a large parade ground flanked on one side by an L-shaped barrack block and on the other sides by various buildings in differing stages of dilapidation. In the 1978 aerial photograph one can see the former SS barracks clad in



The desk/ filing cabinet for inmates records now on display in the museum.



Above: Picture of the forbidden land. The best possible comparison of the factory area in which the train stood (see page 14) taken just before our 'pull' by German police (H minus 10 minutes). Below: H minus 5 minutes, the SS married quarters.



scaffolding, but it is now fully restored and looks much as it did when it was first built.

Anyway it appeared that we had overshot the headquarters building because a police car soon drew up and the driver told us to follow him. We stopped outside one of the 'rococo' buildings and were shown in to the office of the officer commanding the 4th Battalion of the Bavarian Bereitschaftspolizei. There is nothing yet in England to compare with this type of police force. Its nearest equivalents outside Germany are the US State Troopers, French and Belgian Gendarmerie and the Spanish Guardia Civil. The Bereitschaftspolizei (or literally the Readiness Police) are a full-time armed police force at the disposal of the Bavarian Minister President. The BSP is organised and trained on military lines and is equipped with light infantry weapons, its main function being to provide a highly-trained and mobile force for deployment in the interior in case of war, revolution or national disaster. Ironically it was for just these tasks that the first armed SS units were formed forty-six years ago! During the period of the '100,000-man Army', similar police forces were formed all over Germany and, when conscription was re-introduced in 1935, they were transferred into the German Army. Today these Federal Police Forces would provide a pool of trained military personnel should war break out in Europe.

We were politely received by the battalion commander and his adjutant and we explained to them, face to face across a conference table in his office, exactly what we were trying to achieve. The commander very kindly offered, despite the lateness of the hour, to try and phone his superiors in Munich to see if they would give permission. As we had no desire to place the man in an awkward position, Andrew, whose command of German best befitted the occasion, was obliged to confess that we had already been turned-down by the highest authority. The officer was quite taken aback and, controlling his temper, ended the interview by warning us in no uncertain terms, that if we tried to take any photographs inside his barracks, he would be obliged to confiscate our cameras, films and vehicle.

Our work in Dachau was now at an end although sadly we had not achieved as much as we had hoped. As we drove away from that grim place we discussed the next chapter in our story. We had in our possession seven official US Army photographs of American troops advancing on Dachau. The only clue to the location shown in these photos (simply stated as Dachau area) was a signpost in the first photo in the series (SC207123) which showed it to have been taken 32.5 km from Aichach. Photo SC207124 also showed a church spire in the background. We had not driven far along the road to Aichach before we spotted the spire in the distance. Thereafter it did not take long to pinpoint photo SC207123, despite the fact the numbering of the houses seems to have been changed since the war. The next photo (SC 207124) was fairly easy to match up with the church and farm on the right.

The remaining five photographs (SC207125, 207126, 207127, 207128 and 271391) posed a problem as there was little in the shots to help find the location. It was decided, as a last resort, to knock on the door of the farm building nearest the chapel. The door was answered by a young man and a girl. Andrew showed them the photos and they were very amused to see their church with a shell hole in it. As they looked at the photos Andrew took a close look at the tower and it was not difficult to see the repaired hole.

The young man who spoke very good English told us that there was an elderly farmer still living there who had been in the farm when the Americans arrived on April 29, 1945. The old farmer was duly called and introduced to us. He then mentioned



H-Hour. Following the traditional German police greeting of 'Ausweis bittel' the ATB team are interrogated concerning our historical survey of the camp.



Above: Photo SC207123. GIs of the 42nd Division on the warpath in Webling, about a mile north-west of Dachau. The kilometre post was our clue for establishing the location. **Below:** The main road actually runs between the photographer and the fence but is hidden by the low angle of view.



something that amazed us. When Andrew showed him the photos which had puzzled us he described what had happened that fateful day just over one week before the end of the Second World War. This then is the story as

reconstructed by the ATB team from statements made by an elderly Bavarian farmer eye-witness, corroborated to a large extent by official US Army photos and the original captions on the backs of the photos.



The Webling Incident

As the war gradually drew to a close with the full extent of the horrors of Dachau still to be exposed another terrible, yet forgotten incident was to be enacted in the little hamlet of Webling about ten kilometres north-east of Dachau.

Webling was and still is a cluster of four or five substantial farmhouses and barns and the Chapel of St. Leonhard, nestling in the rolling downs just off the main Dachau to Aichach road. In those days the farms were run by the women assisted by French prisoners-of-war. The husbands were already dead or prisoners, or were still fighting and dying in the hopeless struggle against Germany's enemies who were rapidly closing in for the kill.

Early on the morning of April 29, 1945 a unit of the Waffen-SS arrived in Webling to man defensive positions (trenches and foxholes) prepared some weeks before by concentration camp inmates and French POWs. The SS troops occupied a commanding position on high ground traversed by sunken tracks and shielded by bushes and trees which were yet to come into leaf.

Below: SC207125 states: 'Platoon rounds up part of 30 SS troopers who were engaging elements of the 42nd Division'.

Above: Having crossed the road, the rifleman take cover. This is the next photo in the series (SC207124); St. Leonhards Chapel and the Furtmayer farm are in the background.
Below: We pinpointed the spot beside the secondary road which leads past the farm.





The SS unit had left Dachau that morning with orders to establish a defensive screen and hold up the American advance for as long as possible in the vicinity of Webling. Although there had been much publicity about the vaunted Alpine redoubt manned by fanatical Nazis who would fight to the death, most Germans, including members of the Waffen-SS, knew that the war was lost and that the best they could do was put up a token resistance and surrender at the first available opportunity. There can be no doubt that, at this stage, the main preoccupation of both Germans and Americans was to survive the war.

The Americans, supported by tanks from the 20th Armored Division approached Webling and came under fire. The American armour peppered the farmhouses and barns with machine gun fire and high explosive shells blew holes in the tower of St. Leonhard's chapel. As the firing began, the German civilians and French POWs scurried into the cellars.

It was the GIs of the 222nd Infantry Regiment, 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division, XV Corps of the Seventh US Army who crossed the main Dachau/Webling road under fire at about midday (photo 207123). They then crawled uphill until they could observe the German positions. Webling and the shell-damaged chapel can be seen in the distance in photo 207124. The American infantry then moved across the open valley and, although exposed to the SS defenders, only one American soldier was killed. The SS troops were now probably split into three separate groups — one in the farm, one in the copse behind the farm and the third on the crest of the ridge.

Having lost one of their comrades the Americans were in a foul mood when they entered the farmyard. The first German to clamber out of the cellar and approach the American soldiers was the owner of the farm, Herr Furtmayer, but the suspicious and edgy Americans shot him on sight. At this tense and dangerous moment the French POWs emerged from their hiding places and assured the Americans that those hiding in the cellars were civilians and not SS. The first SS man to surrender was one of the two officers commanding the SS detachment, Freiherr von Truchsess from Augsburg, at the head of a group of some seventeen men. According to our eighty-year-old German witness, the SS officer was immediately struck on the head by an American soldier with an entrenching tool with such force that his skull was cleft in two.

With the surrender of this group the Americans may have considered the continuing spasmodic firing from the other isolated groups of Waffen-SS men further up the hill as a dirty ruse but, whatever the



The next photograph in the sequence - SC207126 (top) and SC207128 (above). The discrepancy in the numbering — SC207127 has obviously been taken later — can probably be explained in the post-war renumbering of all European Army (EA) photographs by the Pentagon into the new Signal Corps (SC) numbering system in which the original wartime print numbers have been lost.



reason, the seventeen Waffen-SS men were lined up in front of an earthen bank and shot. According to our witness this execution took place in the farmyard, where now a chicken house stands.

The farmyard where the surrender took place and, according to our witness, the first execution occurred. The earth bank was on the left where the white building now stands.



Above: Picture SC271391 by T/5. J. W. Bowen originally released on May 25, 1945. The caption particularly asks the reader to, 'note in background unusual position of dead SS members'.

Below: We established that Technician 5th grade Bowen (equivalent to corporal) stood right beside the chapel to take the photo; the editor moved just a little further back to illustrate the point.





Having dealt with the defenders of the farm buildings, the Americans moved a few paces up the track behind the farm. Photo 271391 shows some SS men laying where they had fallen, roughly in a straight line. The original caption to this photo comments on the 'unusual position of dead SS members'. It is possible that these are, in fact, the SS men which our eye-witness remembers as having been executed in the farmyard, or it shows another group of SS men who may have been summarily shot as they prepared to surrender.

The Americans continued a further 100 yards up the twin tracks which led to the crest of the ridge. Here another group of SS men under the command of an SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer surrendered (photo 207125/6/8). The original captions to these photos state that, 'Platoon rounds up part of thirty SS troopers who were engaging elements of the 42nd Division'.

Now we come to the final photo (207127) taken only some fifty feet away with its caption stating: 'Infantryman looks at dead SS troopers killed in a fire fight with the 42nd Division'. A careful study of this photo would suggest that these men (who may or may not be the men in photo 207125) had surrendered and had been ordered to lay down their weapons and remove their equipment or they may have laid down their weapons before surrendering. In any event the photo clearly shows rifles, grenades and ammunition magazines neatly laid on the bank while their belts are on the track where they have fallen when removed. The SS men lay dead. The body in the foreground wears the badges of rank of an SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer.

Having cleared Webling and, according to one of the photo captions, 'wiped them out, killed eight, captured twenty-two and suffered no casualties', the American platoon carried on towards Dachau, which had been liberated by their colleagues in the 45th Division at 1.00

Above: Picture SC207127 (the one mentioned as being out of order on page 31). The location is only some few yards from that on the opposite page. Below: This is the same spot — the grave where the dead SS were buried was fifty yards further down the track in the field on the left.



p.m. that same day (the line of demarcation between the two divisions actually ran through Dachau). According to our German witness the Americans left behind them one dead American soldier, one SS officer with a cleft skull, a second dead SS officer and forty-one dead SS men but no prisoners. Next day a farmer, assisted by local people, French POWs and some ethnic Germans (Volksdeutsche) from Hungary billeted in a

couple of huts in Webling, loaded the bodies onto a farm cart and carried them to the top of the hill and buried them in the field at the side of the track. In the following weeks and months, distraught Germans came in search of their relatives when they heard they may have been killed near Webling and at the end of 1945, the bodies were exhumed by the German War Graves Commission and sent for burial near their places of birth.

AFTER THE BATTLE

WRECK RECOVERY

Epping Forest Ju 88

On the evening of Sunday, December 8, 1940, a Junkers Ju 88A-1 from 6/LG1 took off from the German-occupied airfield at Orleans/Bricy, 50 miles south of Paris. At the controls of aircraft serial L1+ KP was Unter-offizier Max Jappsen, his crew consisting of Feldwebel Egidius Leipold (Observer) and air gunners Gefreiter Anton Dornauer and Franz Weber.

The aircraft, travelling on a north-westerly heading, set course for England at 5,000 metres. As it approached the eastern outskirts of London, a well-placed burst of anti-aircraft fire from the Chigwell Rise battery (one of the first using radar-predicted guns) scored a hit and the aircraft descended in a northerly direction. Passing over Loughton, the under gunner fired a burst at a searchlight unit which was located in the grounds of Loughton Girls' School. Over Epping Forest the tail detached falling to earth in Warlies Park at Upshire. Complete loss of control followed, the Junkers smashing into the forest ten yards south of Lodge Road, some 200 yards from the A11, the shock-wave being felt in Upshire and Theydon Bois, both a mile either side of the crash. Burning fuel was spread over a wide area, the Loughton fire brigade, under the direction of Chief Fire Officer Ernest Rule, fighting for several hours to contain the blaze.

At first light on Monday a terrible scene of death and destruction became apparent with the remains of the dismembered crewmen scattering the area and the trees to the north



The remains of the Junkers Ju 88 under guard in December 1940 in Epping Forest.





Items recovered at the scene of the crash by Chief Fire Officer Ernie Rule.

of Lodge Road were festooned with debris. Personnel from RAF North Weald arrived to clear up the mess and remove the surface wreckage. By Wednesday the local undertaker, Poulton & Sons from Epping, had been called in to remove what human remains had been found and these were buried in a single coffin on December 14 at Chingford Mount Cemetery. When the RAF team finally departed they fenced off the ten-foot-deep crater made by the impact of the 12½-ton bomber with picket posts and wire.

After the war, the Conservators of Epping Forest (who maintain the forest land for the City of London) used craters left by exploding bombs for the burial of refuse and the Ju 88 crater, quite near the Wake Arms public house, was used as a convenient tip for bulk litter.

Over the following years, vegetation grew around the site and, by 1976, no one would have realised the drama that had taken place nearly forty years before. That is not until Tony Graves of the London Air Museum heard of the incident and obtained unique permission to dig in Epping Forest.

Interest in aircraft crash sites had already been aroused locally with the dig of the No. 303 Squadron Hurricane of Flying Officer Marian Pisarek by the same group in June 1976 (see *After the Battle* No. 13) and, in fact, there was resentment in some quarters about a Kent-based group moving into 'foreign parts'.

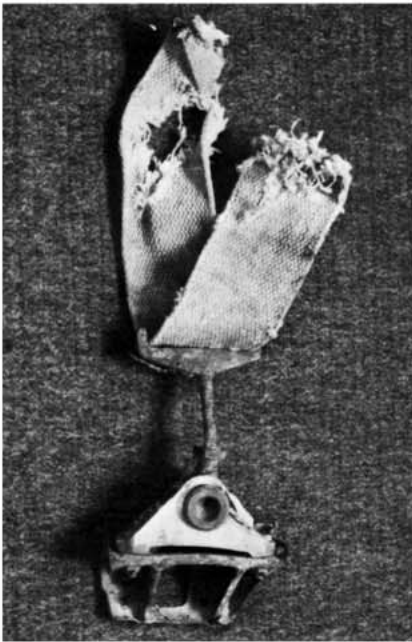
After permission to go ahead was obtained from the Epping Forest Conservators, the excavation was planned for Saturday, July 10. At first, the JCB excavator began work on the edge of a forest car-parking area but soon moved a few yards away where a raised mound of earth gave huge readings on the group's metal detector operated by John Tickner. Although the first objects recovered were only rusty dustbins and old iron, the petrol smell of a crash site was soon unmistakable as the excavator dug deeper. The first pieces of wreckage came to light about six-feet down, the hole being expanded to twelve feet deep and about fifteen long. It seemed that the group was mainly intent on recovering the twin Jumo 211 engines and many small items were left unnoticed. The editor and his son, up to their ears in muck (and bullets as it happened) doggedly probed

Right: A profusion of old water tanks, rusty bicycles and discarded kitchen utensils first had to be removed from the old crater which had been used by keepers clearing up rubbish dumped in the forest. The first aircraft parts were uncovered some six feet down.



Above: The original grave, No.36836, of three of the crewmen in a corner of Chingford Mount Cemetery. The collective grave contained the remains of seven other Germans and they were all exhumed and re-interred in Cannock Chase German war cemetery in 1966 — the Ju 88 crew in Block 8, Grave 53. No record exists at Chingford cemetery or the German war graves headquarters of the fourth man, Franz Weber.





Left: We found this graphic reminder of the fate of the crew — one of the seat harnesses snapped on impact. Above: A smashed MG 75-round saddle drum.

around the spoil heap to save what was possible. We later found we had one of the crew's harness straps which had snapped in the crash and also an MG 15 ammunition drum which had exploded in the fire.

Over the ensuing weeks, historical organisations in the area openly voiced their criticisms on the intrusion in what they considered was a piece of local history and, additionally, the Epping Forest authorities were unhappy about the state in which the area was left. In spite of this, the matter had largely been forgotten until, in January 1979, a member of the group contacted 590 Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Headquarters at Rochester in Kent saying that he had reason to believe a bomb still existed on the site. Captain Spencer Henry of 590 Squadron, Territorial Army Volunteer Reserve (TAVR) visited the forest with Sergeant-Major R. J. Collins, BEM and Sergeant F. V. Sels but, in error, was not shown the correct location and therefore returned with an inconclusive report. Coincidentally, Mr. Mark Bailey, Deputy Curator of the Epping Forest Museum Service, acting on local rumour regarding the 1976 excavation, informed the police that he believed bombs still lay in the area. The message was relayed to Chattenden and an emergency team went immediately to Epping Forest. They also found nothing conclusive but, on returning to base, heard that Captain Henry was already involved in further research as to the exact site. He then paid a further visit to the vicinity with another member of the original excavation group accompanied by Sergeant Bernard Cullum and Mike Llewellyn of the Battle of Britain museum at Chilham Castle, Kent. After some considerable deliberation and detailed investigation, a large area giving a maximum reading on the Forster 4015 locator was found. This was now sufficient evidence for Captain Henry to plan a thorough excavation.

The following week he again visited the site when he met with a Forestry official to plan the operation and discuss security and road closures. At this stage, the police were also advised of the proposed operation.

A 15-man team under Captain Henry arrived to set up camp in the forest on Friday, April 20, 1979. Early Sunday morning, using a JCB digger, parts of the aircraft were uncovered and, later that day, a piece of twisted metal sheeting was recognised as a bomb fin of German design. The paint was still visible showing the tell-tale, 40mm yellow identification stripe denoting a thin-walled

German HE bomb. With this piece of positive evidence, the team dug with renewed effort in the sticky, glutinous mud. Late Sunday night a large object was detected at a depth of thirteen feet by Sergeant Bernard Cullum on the 4015 locator. Further excavation un-

covered the nose portion of a German 500kg bomb at 4.00 p.m. on Monday afternoon. EOD HQ was immediately informed and the Regular Army Duty BDO, Major Barry Birch (OC of 49 EOD Squadron, RE), called to the site.



One of the parachutes was recovered still folded — when laid out to dry it was found to be virtually undamaged.





In peacetime it is obviously not necessary to take undue risks with the defusing process but it had already been decided that the bomb could not be blown up in situ. Although the nearest house was 300 metres away, an explosion in a forest can produce very dangerous wood splinters as well as the destruction which would be wrought to a conservation area. A 500kg bomb exploding buried would produce a 45ft diameter crater twelve feet deep and the danger area would extend to a radius of 220 metres. Also, as the Ju 88 could carry up to twenty variations of bomb load (seven of which include 500kg bombs), it was by no means certain that the one found was the only bomb.

Bomb disposal officers of the TAVR, although they have the necessary training, are not permitted to handle the immunisation stage without a Regular Army officer being in attendance. When Major Birch arrived on site at 5.30 p.m. Captain Henry accompanied him to the hole, where the bomb now lay uncovered, to examine the situation.



The portion of bomb fin which indicated the presence of a German HE bomb.

Above left: After its removal by trepanning, the fuse pocket still contained the picric acid booster charge. Using PE4 plastic explosive, Major Barry Birch prepares to blow the pocket. **Above:** The moment of truth . . . missed by the boys from Fleet Street . . . who had to ask for a re-run (*photo below*). No doubt this was later captioned as, 'Major Birch sets off the charge!'



Meanwhile that afternoon, the Press had got wind of the operation and exaggerated stories were broadcast of a plane and crew being found by hikers, loaded with bombs and with the Germans still on board. By 5.00 p.m., BBC and ITV news teams had arrived hot foot for what they hoped was a headline story. When told that only one 500kg bomb had been found, and that this was not capable of destroying all of Epping as had been rumoured, both units soon departed. They were also upset at not being able to pass beyond the Control Point which had been set up on the edge of the 250-metre cordon of white tape around the site. However, the editor remained patiently behind and was privileged to be escorted to the bomb in its muddy pit when Major Birch gave his permission for photographs to be taken.

Having returned and been checked through the control tent (a system designed to ensure that the Army is always aware of every person within the cordon in case of accidents), plans were made to deal with the bomb.

The bomb was in such good condition that

Captain Henry had to scrape the matt grey paint off the fuse head with his thumbnail before he could read it. This was then identified from its markings as a Type 25 Electrical Impact Fuse. The setting was at the position 1 which meant the fuse could be set at either a 0.08 or 14 second delay.

The standard text-book procedure for dealing with an electrical fuse is to immunise it by creating a vacuum in the fuse and allowing an inhibiting liquid (called BD fluid) to be drawn in and discharge any latent electricity in the condenser. Although it was accepted that the bomb had probably not been armed (i.e. charged with electricity) as it had landed together with the aircraft, chances could not be taken.

By 9.00 p.m. all security precautions had been taken, the nearby A11 (re-numbered in 1978 in a fit of bureaucratic madness as the A1184, A414, B1393 and A104) closed for half-a-mile in each direction and the windows of the nearest house opened. Floodlights lit the excavation as Major Birch and Captain Henry (an estate agent in Kent in civilian life)



The morning after his first extraction, Captain Spencer Henry shows the Type 25 fuse (large part) with the small gain charge protruding on the right. After unscrewing from the fuse, the explosive in the gain was burnt out with petrol to preserve the container.

examined the fuse. They found that although the screws, through the holes of which the fluid is often injected, could not be undone, the locking ring holding the fuse in its pocket was loose. Major Birch therefore decided to allow Captain Henry to remove the fuse and perform his first live fuse extraction. After the locking ring had been unscrewed and a secondary locating collar removed, he was all set to withdraw the fuse itself.

A bomb is detonated by a three-stage explosion. First the fuse mechanism itself fires a primer which sets off the gain which protrudes from the inner end of the body of the fuse case. The gain itself fits snugly inside a ring of solid picric acid (a volatile booster explosive), five circular blocks of which fill the remainder of the fuse pocket. When the picric acid explodes it sets off the main charge.

Withdrawal of the fuse is the hand-shaking part, not in this case because of any anti-handling device but because picric acid can deteriorate with age, forming crystals which can explode at the slightest friction. When Captain Henry tried to pull out the fuse it would not budge. Undeterred, he asked Major Birch to throw him a screwdriver which he did, telling him to 'Get on with it!'. Gently the fuse was levered against the ridge in the central boss and slowly it came free. It was covered in poisonous picric acid and stained the captain's hands. By 11.00 p.m. the nerve-racking operation, carried out in pouring rain, had been completed. Captain Henry was walking on air.

The next stage was to trepan the bomb, the technical term for connecting up a special rotary cutting tool which makes a 3½-inch hole in the bomb casing without producing any heat. For this operation the bomb is winched from the excavation and set up on boards covering a shallow pit some fifty yards away. When holes have been cut in the bomb casing, a steamer is connected to the bomb. This device, something like a large kettle, produces piped steam which melts the cast explosive (in this case Amatol) which runs out and solidifies on hessian lining the pit. This stage can still be dangerous as the temperature of the superheated steam is above the ignition point of the explosive. This leaves the

fuse pocket with its picric acid booster intact in the bomb which is then blown up — an explosion still powerful enough to split the case.

However, these days, because bomb cases are in short supply for training purposes, the actual fuse pocket itself was trepanned from the bomb. This meant that it could be exploded on its own so keeping the case intact.

Steaming the bomb continued throughout the night and, when the editor arrived back at the Control Point at 7.00 a.m. next morning, Major Birch explained what had taken place during the night. When members of the national press had arrived, we were all taken to the clearing where the now-empty bomb case reposed. Nearby a six-foot diameter excavation was twelve inches deep with 300lbs of steaming, solidifying explosive.

The first operation was to blow up the fuse pocket. The editor watched Major Birch knead half-a-pound of PE4 plastic explosive as if it were plasticine and place this on the metal tube. Two hundred yards of twin-core cable was run out and connected to the detonator which was inserted into the white ball of explosive. We all retired to the A11, which was still closed to traffic, where the exploder had been set up although the editor

was disappointed to find this was of a modern press-button type (Exploder Dynamo Condenser to be exact) rather than the traditional T-handle job of all good adventure films. At 9.00 a.m. a tremendous bang and a cloud of black smoke was a graphic illustration of the power of the picric acid charge. When we examined the site of the explosion beside an old tree stump, a two-foot crater and one piece of fuse pocket was all that was left. A nearby tree had been liberally spanged with shrapnel.

The second high spot of the proceedings was the firing of the explosive in the pit. After being sloshed with petrol, a cordite bag charge was connected to the cable and we returned once more to the roadway. Although there was only a resulting 'phut' when the button was pressed, this ignited the petrol which soon fired the explosive. A dense column of black smoke rose above the trees and flames reached a height of six feet, immediately attracting a police helicopter to the scene. The fire burned for about half-an-hour, Major Birch keeping the sightseers back as the intense heat of the fire could still cause the explosive to burn to detonation.

Thereafter, the Press, having photographed everything and everybody from every angle, departed satisfied.



Above: Three hundred pounds of Amatol steamed from the bomb in the hessian-lined pit. Below: With the bomb case standing nearby, the explosive is fired.





The fact that one bomb had been found confirmed the rumours but it also meant that the whole area would have to be checked out thoroughly. Because of the mass of old metal items in the ground as well as aircraft parts, all of which made clear readings with the 4015 locator impossible, the top six feet of earth had to be progressively scraped clear before the detector could be used properly.

At 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, Captain Don Marshall (2 i/c to Major Birch who had meanwhile departed to attend a course in the United States) arrived to get a progress report. No sooner had he left the site, when Sapper Hughie Marshall, the expert JCB operator, struck gold. Corporal Jim Treslove had been directing the search with the locator when, at 3.32 p.m. a dull clunk, an unmistakable sound once heard, signalled another bomb. Although the initial reaction was to duck, the enthusiasm of all the sappers was a joy to behold. Whoops of delight with Sergeant Bernard Cullum dancing for joy will remain to the editor one of those 'magic moments'.

The area was immediately cleared and the bomb uncovered to establish the type of fuse. Because the editor (a so-called member of the Press) had been present when the bomb had been found, there was no possibility of leaving its defusing until morning and another all-night session was set in operation. Captain Marshall was re-called and the A11 (sorry,

Above: Corporal Jim Treslove continues the search with the 4015 Forster Locator. As soon as the second bomb was found the A11 was cordoned off for a second time (photo below) — the crash site lies about a quarter-of-a-mile beyond the Wake Arms pub.



Below left: The second beast ready for the operation. Below: The fuse after removal. The screw setting pointing to position I means a 0.08 or 14 second delay. The hole drilled to introduce the BD fluid can be seen just below the right-hand screw.





A1184, A414, B1393, A104) once again closed. The crash crew were alerted at Chattenden and they set out with the trepanning and steaming gear. (This is always held at base until a bomb is actually located and it had been returned on Tuesday morning.)

This time it was agreed that a section commander in 591 Squadron, Captain Mark Klewin, (who was acting as Security Officer) and Second Lieutenant Ian Taylor, a section commander in 590 Squadron, should handle the immunisation under Captain Marshall and Captain Henry's direction. It was planned to use the standard immunisation process and, in fact, a hole was drilled into a pre-determined safe spot on the fuse through which the BD liquid was introduced. The bomb was then given a 'jerk and bump' test from a safe distance before winching it from the hole. After the fuse pocket had been trepanned, the picric acid charges fell out of the fuse pocket in perfect condition as the bomb was turned over. No sweating of the explosive had occurred and the printing on the paper wrapper was clearly visible.

Officers from the Army's Research and Development unit at Fort Halstead were on hand to take samples of the explosive for laboratory examination, the reason being to check that the previously-proven methods of defusing bombs are still safe. The fear is that if the German explosives deteriorate with age, new methods may have to be devised for dealing with future bombs.

As the picric acid charges had fallen out of the fuse pocket, these could be burned in the open with the bulk explosive so we were denied a second bang.

After the road was opened, the search continued for a possible two further bombs which could have been on board. However although trenches were dug to a depth of fifteen feet all over the area, nothing further was located. Nevertheless the area could still

Above: WO2 Frank Betts, holding the fuse pocket and one of the picric acid charges, explains the operation to the squaddies as they are photographed for the front cover of the June 1979 TAVR magazine. Below: Forty years after it was made, the printing was clearly readable on the wrappers of the picric acid explosive.



not be certified as safe and a further operation was carried out in September 1979 in which bore holes were sunk all over the site to a depth of thirty feet. By lowering a bomb locator down the shafts, readings could then be taken below ground and plotted on a map

to give a complete picture of the metal objects existing. No further bombs were detected and, after reinstating the area, the army departed . . . the three year saga was at an end . . . leaving car-borne courting couples to dream their dreams in peace.

AFTER THE BATTLE

CRIME IN WWII



THE 10th REPLACEMENT DEPOT AT LICHFIELD

BY RICHARD SUSKIND

The cathedral city of Lichfield in Staffordshire lies just north of the A5 junction with the A38 north of Birmingham and is equally well-known as Dr. Johnson's birthplace. Before the war it was also the headquarters of the North and South Staffordshires (of Arnhem fame) located in Whittington Barracks beside the A51 road to Tamworth.

After America joined the war in 1941, it was obvious that England would become the staging post for the eventual invasion of Europe. Whittington Barracks was chosen as the location for the US 10th Replacement Depot which was to funnel over 200,000 Americans to the front in Europe by the end of 1944. The Victorian red-brick barracks, lying on bleak, windswept high ground east of the city, must have been a depressing sight to weary GIs having just undergone a perilous North Atlantic crossing. To cope with its expansion, temporary wooden huts and bell tents had been erected in the fields around the camp with only duckboards and pot-bellied army stoves to keep out the mud and the cold. The cross and eagle emblem of the 10th Replacement Depot, fixed to a board at the camp gates, carried the motto 'We are not surprised at anything' — phrase which was to have an ironic ring in the light of subsequent events.

The barracks were, in addition, used as a detention stockade for minor military offenders and a total of more than 6,000 prisoners were rigorously put through their paces at Lichfield in an endeavour to teach them the error of their ways.

Army methods in wartime are, of necessity, severe. As most of the servicemen stayed at the camp only two or three weeks, scant attention was paid to their comfort. Likewise, little



Top: Lieutenant-Colonel James A. Kilian, commanding officer of the 10th Replacement Center at Lichfield, Staffordshire, on the parade ground on October 21, 1943. Lieutenant-Colonel Alfred H. Aldridge, Admin officer stands on the extreme right (US Army). **Above:** Whittington Barracks today — RSM Williams, Depot Sergeant-Major drills recruits for their passing out parade, August 1979.

significance was given to the complaints made by men who had passed through the depot when they joined their units. There was a war on. No one seemingly had time to listen to griping GIs, especially those that had been court-martialed for being absent without leave.

Nothing was done until January, 1945, when Corporal Robert O. Henney of Toledo, Ohio, was assigned to temporary guard duty at the 10th Replacement Depot. Henney was making his rounds one evening when he saw other guards strip a prisoner naked and beat him with a rubber hose until he screamed in agony. When he tried to reason with the guards, Henney was told to shut up and mind his own business. He felt it was his business. so when he returned to the States on leave he told the story to his hometown newspaper, the *Toledo Blade*. Under wartime regulations, the paper had to submit the story to the Office of

Censorship. When it did so, publication was denied. Shortly afterwards, Corporal Henney received a visit from Army officers at his home and he was taken to Camp Perry, Virginia for questioning. After taking statements from him he was released but posted back to Europe before the expiry of his leave.

Not able to print the story, *The Blade* passed on details of their interview with Corporal Henney to Congressman Homer Ramey which precipitated an official enquiry by the Army authorities.

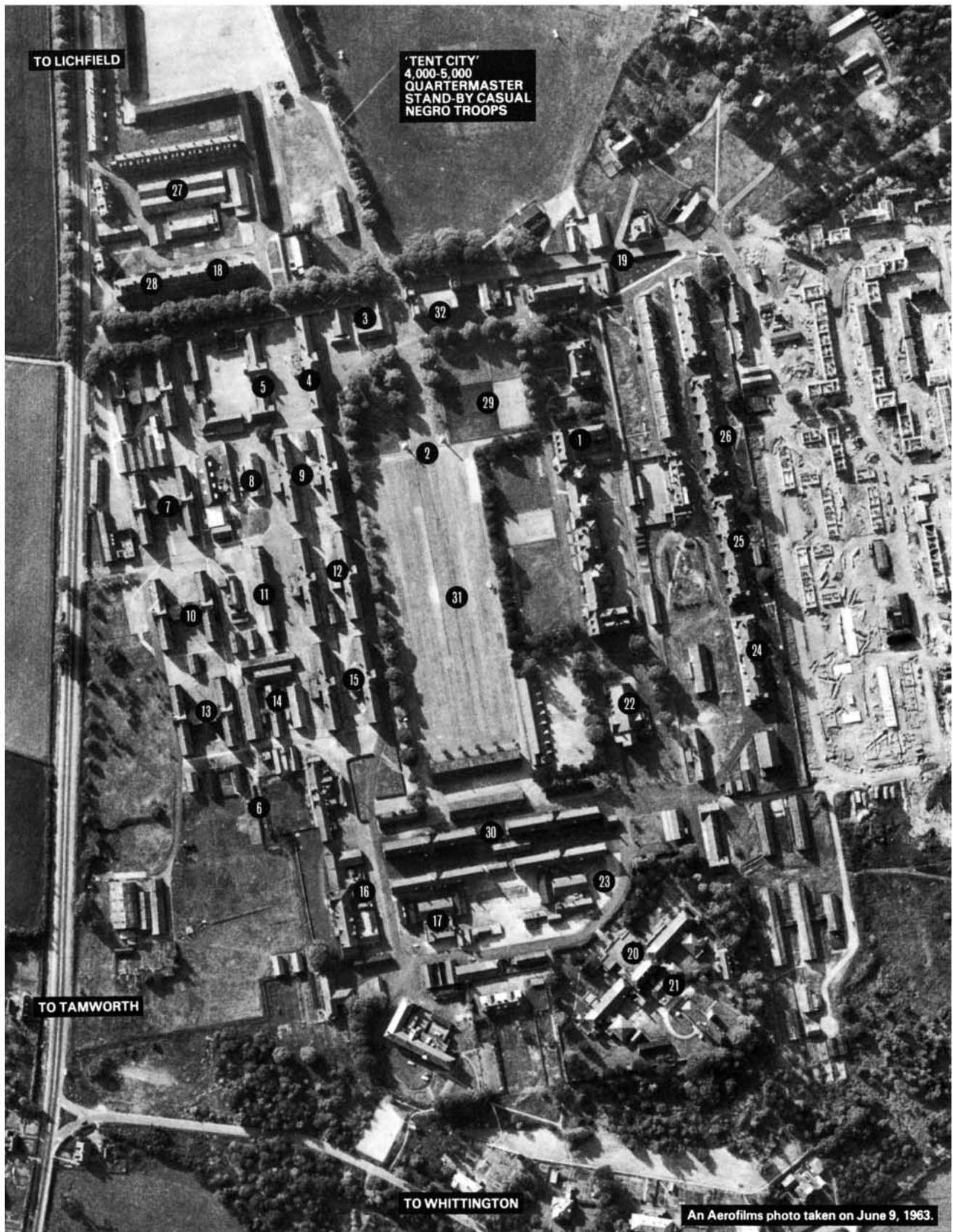
The investigation progressed with painful slowness, however, and it was not until the end of 1945, long after the war was over and thousands of GIs had been sent home, that the first trial was held. It did not make headlines immediately as it was only a sergeant being court-martialed for mistreating GI prisoners.

The first trial was held in a bare, dingy



Life at Lichfield, December 1943. *Top left:* Captain Walter F. Musegades, Commander of the Receiving Battalion (wearing brassard), chalks each new man's passenger list number on the front of his helmet as he arrives during the British blackout at the local railway station. *Above:* Formed in columns of fours, an NCO marches the men away in a reduced column of twos. *Left:* Lieutenant Werner N. Snow, representing the Depot Classification office, receives the individual records of every man from the Troop Train Commander (armed with M1 carbine). *Below:* Once at the barracks, each man enters his own arrival on a 'Locator Card'. Medical inspection follows before classification to a military duty is finalised. *Below left:* Major William H. Stone, Depot Classification and Assignments Officer, uses the McBee Key Selector system to single out individual capabilities before assignment to a particular duty. *Below:* A well-earned rest. The Service of Supply provides a dance band to greet every arriving group at its first meal (US Army).





- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Clock Tower Building | 15. Casual Officers' Mess | 23. Casual Officers' Mess |
| 2. North and South
Staffs. Monuments | 16. American Red Cross Club | 24.-26. WACS' Quarters |
| 3. Provost-Marshall | 17. Post Theatre | 27. Quartermaster Corps |
| 4. Guard House No. 1 | 18. NAAFI | 28. Military Police Barracks |
| 5. Guard House No. 2 | 19. British Post Office | 29. Tennis Courts |
| 6. Guard House No. 3 | 20. Nurses' Quarters | 30. Casual Officers' Barracks |
| 7.-14. Enlisted Men's Barracks | 21. Hospital | 31. Parade Ground |
| | 22. Church | 32. US Post Office |

courtroom in Grosvenor Square, London. The sergeant was a slim, mild-looking Kentuckian named Judson Smith. He hardly looked or acted the part of a guard accused of jabbing combat veterans in their old wounds and clubbing prisoners until they collapsed with blood streaming from their mouths.

As the days went by and witnesses were called and dismissed, two facts became obvious: one, that Sergeant Smith was guilty; two, that he was only a pawn in a high-stakes game. The Army itself was on trial, and the lines were sharply drawn between those officers who felt they must be loyal to it no matter what, and those who felt a higher loyalty — to an abstraction called 'Justice'.

The trial heated up when Major Richard E. Lobo, the 10th's provost marshal, and Lieutenant-Colonel James A. Kilian, the depot's commanding officer, were called as witnesses. Colonel Kilian's behaviour in particular made everyone sit up and take notice. A stocky, middle-aged man with a square, pugnacious face and green eyes glittering behind steel-rimmed glasses, he was aggressive to the point of arrogance. He stormed into the room and demanded to see the order convening the court. Then, when he had read it, he grunted disdainfully and called for a comfortable chair — 'one with arms on it, if I have to be here all day'.

The prosecutor, Captain Earl J. Carroll, was not intimidated. He led the Army's 'justice-at-any-cost' group and would not be satisfied merely to convict Sergeant Smith and the other enlisted men involved in the case. He wanted the policy-makers. So he went after Kilian, probing him with difficult questions, trying to prod him into damaging admissions.

Kilian was on the stand for five hours. Fourteen times in those five hours the president of the court had to bang his gavel to bring him to order. Once, in fact, Kilian got so angry that he stuck out his tongue at Carroll like a child! 'Time after time,' Kilian shouted, 'I have had it hammered into my head that I will have to stand trial myself in this case!' Nevertheless he admitted nothing, only reiterating that Sergeant Smith was 'one of the best non-commissioned officers I have ever seen.'

Major Lobo, a handsome, dignified officer from Pittsburgh, was more co-operative. 'Colonel Kilian', he testified, 'is trying to control witnesses to keep this off his own doorstep.'

'Didn't he suggest that the Lichfield policy was dictated by higher authority?' Carroll asked the major.

'Yes,' Lobo replied, and named Major General Albert E. Brown, former chief of Ground Reinforcement Command. Brown had paid a visit to the depot, Lobo said, and had complained that the treatment to the prisoners in the guardhouse was too soft. 'You're not tough enough on these men, Sergeant,' the general had told Smith. 'You're running a hotel.'

Another important witness was Sergeant James H. Jones of Muskegee, Oklahoma, who was to face a court-martial himself immediately after Sergeant Smith. At first Jones denied everything. He had never seen any beatings, never heard of any, and certainly had never administered any. But then, after he was granted immunity from a charge of perjury, he admitted having lied and said that both he and Smith had beaten prisoners on various occasions.

'Why did you decide to tell the court the truth?' Carroll asked him.

'Because I was disgusted with the way the officers acted and felt they weren't backing us up,' Jones replied.

'And why were the prisoners beaten?'

'Mostly to scare them so they wouldn't come back. That's when I knew they were trying to evade combat.'

After a long and complicated trial, Sergeant Smith was convicted and sentenced to a



Above: The corporal in the foreground gives the new arrivals their first look at a British Army barracks — steel lockers and lovely, soft springless beds (US Army). **Below:** Today the temporary home of the eleven-man Ferozeshah Platoon seen here in their sixth week of boot polishing.



dishonourable discharge and three years at hard labour in a federal penitentiary. Immediately afterwards, Colonel Kilian, Major Lobo and four other officers were charged with conspiring to inflict 'a cruel, unusual and unauthorized punishment' on the prisoners in the stockade. Captain Carroll wanted to court-martial the colonel at once, before any of the other officers or enlisted men, but Kilian was Regular Army. Strings were pulled, connections used, friendly telephone calls made — and it was finally decided to try the colonel last after the nine enlisted men and five officers who were also listed for court-martial.

Captain Carroll was outraged. 'It's a

blatant whitewash', he told the reporters 'Mark my words, the enlisted men will be convicted and the officers — the men responsible — will go free'. He promptly resigned as prosecutor. He was backed up in his charges by the president of the court, Colonel Louis P. Leone, who also resigned.

This caused such a furor that General Eisenhower sent a team of officers to investigate the case and Undersecretary of War Kenneth Royall, after lamely telling the press that 'there is a good reason for trying the enlisted men first,' sent the Judge Advocate General of the Army and a staff of 15 legal officers and four secretaries to London to 'expedite the trial and to buttress either the



Officer replacements were not spared the regimentation and privations of Lichfield. *Top left:* Major Edgar R. Earwood sits down with other unassigned medical officers to eat their meal from their field kits. *Top right:* After eating the officers are obliged to clean their plates at the 'scrap tub' after mess. The notice on the table states 'Smoking but no loitering'. *Left:* Outside vats of hot soapy and clean water are provided for them to wash their kit. *Above:* Relaxation in the American Red Cross casual officers' lounge. Nurse replacements for the European Theater of Operations in the background. *Below:* At first there was only a barbers shop at the depot but women arrivals necessitated setting up a hairdressers in the Nurse Service Building. Nurse Widener under the drier. *Left:* Lieutenant Colonel Norton, the Adjutant, organises the naturalization of European emigres to secure their prisoner-of-war status in case of capture to prevent them being charged with treason (US Army).





GIs lining up for 'chow' are faced with the sample meal: bar-becued roast pork and apple sauce, mashed potatoes, canned peas, mixed vegetable salad, canned fruit salad (on the same plate!) bread and butter and coffee (US Army).



Today in the rebuilt dining room (photo below) there is a wide choice in the three-course meal and the wording of the notice has now been changed: 'If you want more food ask for it. Don't take too much and waste'.

prosecution or the defense on any particular case.'

Unlike Sergeant Smith's trial, Sergeant Jones's opened in a blaze of publicity. The courtroom was jammed with reporters, and charges and counter-charges flew back and forth. Jones's defense counsel, Lieutenant Maurice McGhee of Birmingham, Alabama, aroused violent controversy when he declared: 'The Lichfield prisoners got the biggest break of their lives when they weren't shot in combat, and the second biggest break when they weren't lined up and shot as deserters.'

Several former prisoners testified that they had seen Jones beat men viciously, sometimes until blood ran from their mouths and they had to be taken to the hospital. Private Henry Petras of New Jersey said he saw six guards, one of them Jones, beat a prisoner for a half hour with fists and clubs, and then throw him into solitary confinement. 'The poor guy was in there three weeks. He was skinny as a rail when he got out — lost fifteen pounds,' Petras testified.

The most damaging testimony, however, appeared in the Army and Navy Bulletin of April 20, 1946. It was a sworn affidavit by Walter P. O'Rourke, a former lieutenant. While still an enlisted man, O'Rourke had



Below left: Private Edward Trainor, inducted into the US Forces in London where he had lived since 1937, arrives at the Depot (US Army). Below: Young recruits undergoing their eighteen-week basic training march past the same spot. Point of identification in both photos is the barracks church roof.



been assigned to temporary guard duty at Lichfield. On December 13, 1944, he was on duty in the prison hospital. His orders were: Sit in a chair facing the entrance to the ward with a loaded rifle and don't allow any prisoners to cross the threshold. Shoot to kill if necessary. While on duty he saw three guards back a prisoner into the corner of a brick building and beat him with clubs until he fell to his knees. 'One of the guards saw me watching the affair. He shouted at me to "get the hell away from here unless you want the same thing"'.

While the Army was still juggling with this hot potato, an even hotter one was handed to it: five witnesses refused to testify unless they were assured of protection by Secretary of War Patterson himself. They had been threatened, they said, by the guards in the London Area Guardhouse.

'Will you agree to testify if the case is moved out of England?' they were asked.

After several conferences with high-ranking officers, who assured them of protection, they agreed, so the trial was moved to the plush Park Hotel in Bad Nauheim, Germany.

Some of the ardor had gone out of the prosecution by this time. For one thing, Captain Carroll's successors apparently were not as willing as he was to step on VIPs' toes, and for another, the old-line Army men were fighting back hard. They were appalled by the Lichfield mess but they were even more appalled that the Army's dirty linen was being washed in public. They wanted the whole ugly business completed as quickly as possible, with a minimum of publicity. The way to do this, they seemed to think, was to play down the gravity of the case by going easy on the accused men. So Sergeant Jones was sentenced to six months at hard labor and fined \$100. And the other enlisted men on trial were treated even more leniently. Not one of them had to serve time in prison! They were fined from \$30 to \$100 and reprimanded.

The verdict did not please the American public, a large proportion of which had members of their families in the Army. The *New York Times* ran a letter from one reader which read in part: 'A reprimand for enlisted men is so rare a punishment that it amounts to an endorsement of their actions. Small wonder that "military justice" is called a contradiction in terms.' The irony of the situation was pointed up even more when PFC



Above: Captain Rebecca Brokenbrough, the Executive Officer, puts newly-arrived WACS through their paces on April 10, 1944 (US Army). **Below:** Luckily this barrack block still stands today — those in the background have been demolished.



Above: Later in August 1944, Lieutenant General John C. H. Lee, US Deputy Commander, European Theater of Operations, inspected a large contingent from the Women's Army Corps

destined as secretaries, postal clerks and other specialist jobs. Lieutenant Colonel Kilian sits on the right with Major General L. V. L. E. Whately, Director of the ATS, on the left (US Army).



Above left: Lieutenant Granville Cubage (left), a material witness for Staff Sergeant James Jones in the London trial, was himself prosecuted when the trials moved to the Park Hotel at Bad Nauheim. Photographed entering the hotel with his defense counsel Lieutenant Morris C. McGee on the right. It is thanks to one of our keen German readers, Herr Karl Heinz Schmelke, and his wife that we have comparison photographs of the Park Hotel



at Bad Nauheim today. He visited the hotel specially for us to meet our press deadline. He discovered that the hotel was given back by the Americans to the former owner Herr Hilbert in 1948. During 1950-51 the ground floor was largely altered with the addition of a reception area and sweeping staircase to the first floor. On Herr Hilbert's retirement in December 1951 he gave the hotel to the State of Hessen.

Joseph Defelice of Brooklyn, one of the witnesses, was fined \$240 and given six months at hard labour for showing disrespect to an officer while waiting to testify!

The Army still tried to soft-pedal the case, but the lid was blown completely off when the accused officers came up for trial. There were too many headline-making events, and the testimony was too explosive. Lieutenant Granville Cubage of Oklahoma City and Lieutenant Leonard W. Ennis of Peekskill, New York, were the first ones to face court-martial. Lieutenant Ennis faced two charges and was accused both of ordering men 'beaten to the ground' and of beating them himself. 'I guess the only way to keep you away from here,' he told one AWOL repeater, Private Mike Koblinsky of Michigan, 'is to beat you all over the place. I guarantee you won't be back after tonight.' And he proceeded to club Koblinsky senseless. Another witness testified that he saw Lieutenant Ennis take a prisoner inside a building and 'come out after a while with bloodstains on his arms and jacket.' Still other witnesses said they had been beaten with a rubber hose for taking a hot shower, lashed fifteen times with a strap for smoking, knocked around with rifle butts and fists and then made to mop up their own blood.

This testimony was given a wide play by the press but big, black headlines blossomed when thirteen key prosecution witnesses refused to testify 'We are being badly treated by the Army,' they said, 'and can expect worse.' Some of them were already serving sentences as AWOLs, but others were to be tried for offences allegedly committed after they had come to Bad Nauheim to testify! 'We witnesses,' said Sergeant Saul Russ of Brooklyn, 'are being held in the guardhouse and treated as prisoners, while accused officers are running around free.'

President Truman stepped in at this point and sent an angry memo to the War Department. As a direct result of the President's intervention, General Joseph T. McNarney, Commander of US Forces in Europe, ordered a complete review of the Lichfield case. He charged the intermediate commanders with negligence and failure to

recognize the case's importance. He also took the stand briefly himself to emphasize that the brutality at Lichfield was decidedly not official Army policy.

A few days later, all but two of the reluctant witnesses agreed to testify. The other two held out until they were threatened with court-martial themselves. This threat amused one of



May 1, 1946, lunch recess. Lieutenant Leonard W. Ennis (right) waits with his defense attorney, Colonel Edward Chayes, for court to reconvene.

them, Private Otto C. Holt of Gilman, Illinois. 'I'm not going to be better off if I testify in this trial,' he said, 'and I'm certainly not going to be worse off . . . Somebody beats me on the head and gets fined sixty dollars. (PFC William Norris, a guard.) I go AWOL and get twenty years. I don't think another six months will hurt me.'

Eventually, the two officers were cleared of personally mistreating prisoners. Cubage was fined \$250 and reprimanded, and Ennis was fined \$350 and reprimanded for permitting guards to abuse captive GIs. Ennis' defense counsel demanded vindication on the grounds that his client had merely obeyed orders, and that the trial was really a 'war on the Army and its methods.' The defense counsel was right. Ennis had obeyed orders. But did this excuse him? 'No one is justified in carrying out improper or illegal orders,' said Colonel C. B. Micklewaite, Judge Advocate in Europe. 'Orders, however, may be considered as mitigating circumstances.'

After Cubage and Ennis had been tried, it was the turn of Captain Joseph Robertson, Major Lobocono and Major Herbert Bluhm. Robertson and Lobocono were found guilty, fined and reprimanded, Bluhm was acquitted.

Now the climax of the case had been reached: the court-martial of Colonel James Alphonse Kilian of Highland Park, Illinois, former cavalry officer, veteran of two world wars, winner of the Legion of Merit and commanding officer of the 10th Replacement Depot — the 'rubber-hose repple-depple,' as it was now called.

The trial got off to a wild start when several witnesses attempted to escape from the local guardhouse. Using a stove poker and a tin can, they dug a four-foot tunnel under the guardhouse floor. The tunnel led to a barbed-wire fence that surrounded the building. 'A couple of days more,' said the guard who accidentally stumbled on the tunnel, 'and they would have been out.'

Headlines were made again a few days later when the prosecutor accused Colonel Hardin Sweeney, a member of the court-martial board, of bias and demanded his removal. Sweeney, he charged, was an old friend of Kilian's. Sweeney denied the charge of bias but admitted having known Kilian since they were students together at the Fort Leavenworth Officers School in 1917. Twice more during the trial Colonel Sweeney was accused of bias and on the last occasion he finally resigned and was replaced by an officer who did not know Colonel Kilian personally.

Another member of the court-martial board, Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Ford of Fort Pierce, Florida, was held in contempt when he charged that one of his colleagues had prearranged a technical ruling in favour of the prosecution. The prosecuting attorney defended the decision and an argument followed. Ford got so angry that he clenched his fists and advanced on the prosecutor. A fist fight was prevented at the last minute by Colonel Kilian himself! He dashed off the stand and got between the two angry men. A twelve-day cooling-off period was hastily declared and the court recessed.

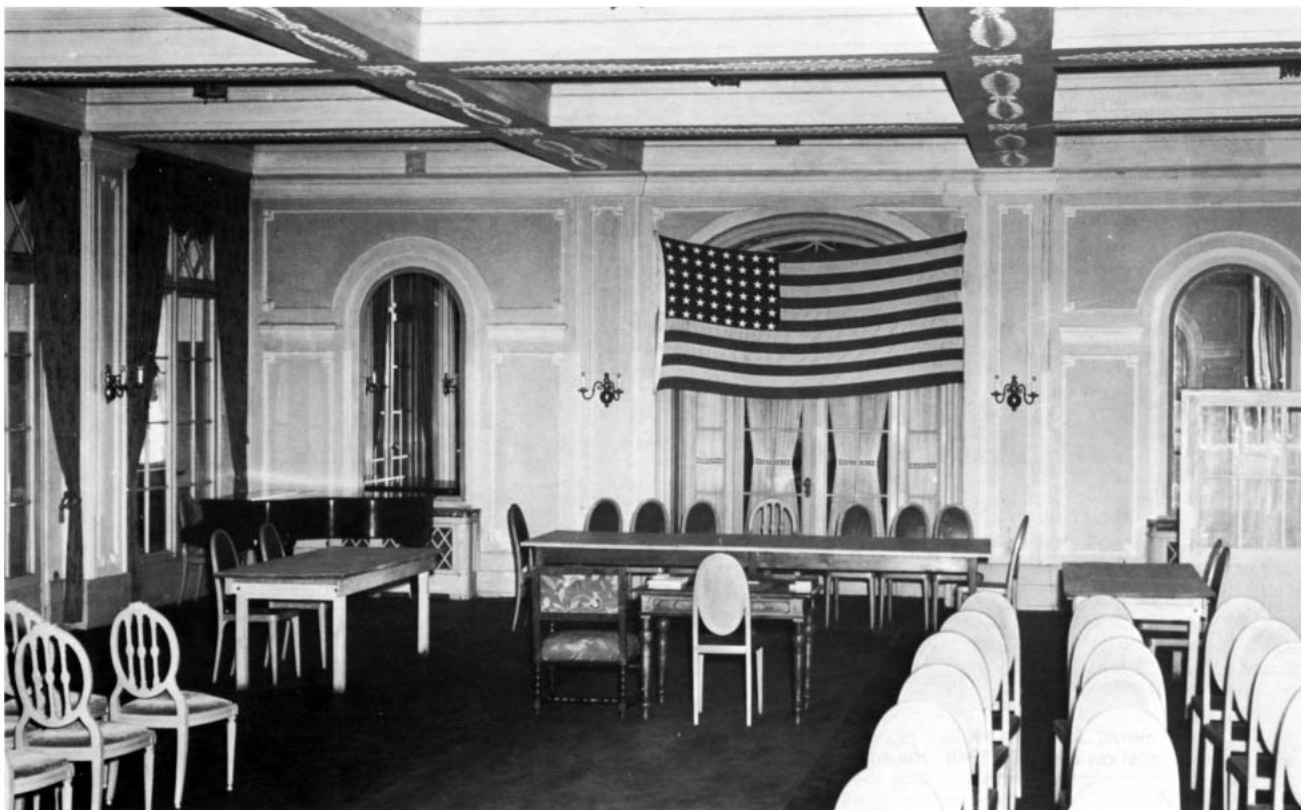
The most important witness for the prosecution was Lieutenant Cubage. He fixed the blame for the Lichfield brutality squarely on Colonel Kilian. On one occasion, he testified, the colonel had told him to take a prisoner down to the rifle range and work him over. 'Just don't break too many bones,' Kilian had said. Fortunately, the prisoner was given a medical examination before the beating was administered. He was found to be insane.

Centre: This was the stockade at Goldstein, a rifle range clubhouse, from where the witnesses nearly escaped. The original building, photographed (right) by Herr K. H. Schmelke, was pulled down in 1964 and rebuilt two years later.



Above: Corporal Robert Hayman of the 790th MP Service Battalion stands guard over some of the prisoners who were witnesses at the trials. L-R: William Pond, Ed Baker, Leon Rickey, Robert Cox, Albert Beach, and Otto Holt. Mike Koblinksi is hidden by Holt.





Above: Courtroom No. 1 photographed on April 21, 1946 before the trials began. In the sweeping post-war alterations to the Park Hotel, this room is now incorporated into the hotel foyer photo below. It was here that Lieutenant Cubage stood trial.

Cubage also said that Kilian had promoted one guard for shooting a prisoner in the leg during an alleged attempt to escape and had promoted another for shooting through the window, near the head of a prisoner who was looking out in violation of orders. 'That's the kind of man I want,' Kilian had said. 'He's carrying out instructions.'

After these two promotions, the guards at Lichfield used to say: 'Shoot a prisoner and make sergeant.'

'I tried to get a transfer,' Cubage told the court, 'because the place was too rough and tough and I didn't want to get hung out on a limb.'

Additional damning testimony was given by PFC Philip A. Damon of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, a former Harvard student. 'Most of the prisoners,' he said, 'were pretty good boys who had been wounded in combat and rebelled against the Army's refusal to let them see town before shipping them back to the front.' Damon admitted that he hadn't witnessed any beatings himself, but said some of the prisoners in his work details had shown him welts on their backs where they had been flogged.

Kilian fought back with every legal manoeuvre at his disposal. He won several delays on technical points. He tried three times — unsuccessfully — to have the case transferred to the United States and he steadfastly denied any responsibility for the beatings and brutality. 'I have a clear conscience about what happened at Lichfield,' he told reporters.

Finally, late in August, 1946 — more than eight months after the trials had begun and more than eighteen months after Corporal Henney's visit to the *Toledo Blade* had begun it all — the last bit of testimony was recorded by the court stenographer, the court-martial board retired to consider its decision and the last sentence was handed down.

Colonel Kilian was found guilty of permitting his guards to manhandle prisoners and deal out punishment prohibited by Army regulations. He was fined \$500 and reprimanded. He was found not guilty of 'knowingly' condoning the Lichfield brutalities.



The public's reactions to this relatively gentle slap on the wrist were outrage, disgust and cynicism. One of the GI spectators at the trial shook his head in mock distress. 'We ought to take up a collection to pay the poor guy's fine,' he said. And an editorial in the *New York Times* said: 'There is clearly a double standard of justice for enlisted men and officers.'

The Lichfield case, however, played an important role in changing the American Army's code of military justice. Congress launched an investigation into the entire court-martial system and found that it had been unduly harsh and arbitrary during the war and that most of the 100,000 GIs convicted by general court-martial had had their sentences drastically reduced. By 1951, Congress had revised the code of military law

from end to end. Among other important changes, military trials were put more in the hands of professional lawyers and enlisted men were now able to demand that one-third of the court be composed of enlisted personnel.

The Kilian case had an ironical aftermath. In April, 1947, President Truman received for his approval a list of 633 Army officers up for promotion. One of the names was James A. Kilian. The President promptly took Kilian off the list, thus preventing him from rising to the rank of full colonel.

Undaunted, Kilian sued the President of the United States for his commission — but his plea was dismissed when Federal Judge David Pine ruled that he had no jurisdiction over the President. A few weeks later, amazingly enough, Kilian's name appeared



Above left: Colonel James A. Kilian photographed just having entered the hotel on May 27, 1946. His trial did not begin until June 17. He was charged with violating the US 96th Article of War which basically covers acts to the prejudice of good order



and military discipline and non-capital crimes against the person. **Above right:** Frau Schmelke discusses the alterations to the hotel with the manager. In the background the new entrance — the old doorway was to the left.

on yet another promotion list forwarded to the White House. Secretary of War Patterson told reporters that he was bound by law to include Kilian. 'What can we do' said a Pentagon spokesman. 'Our system depends on seniority and Kilian has it'. However, Patterson also chose to underline the name of the controversial officer and wrote a marginal note reminding Truman who Kilian was. Again the President struck out Kilian's name. Shortly thereafter, Congress passed a law stipulating that merit — not just length of service — was to be the yardstick in measuring an officer for promotion.

In 1951, Kilian left the Army after 41 years, still a permanent lieutenant colonel and on March 19, 1958, he died of cancer at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington.



The grave of Colonel Kilian, Legion of Merit, in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington: No. 94 Section 30.



Centre: Courtroom No. 2. This was the scene of the conviction of Colonel Kilian and also the acquittal of Major Herbert Bluhm in August 1946. **Below:** Completely re-vamped it is now the hotel bar and grill-room.





Our first visit to Lichfield was on April 18, 1978. We first called at the Staffordshire museum alongside the main camp and there confirmed that the barracks were occupied during the war by the 10th Replacement Depot. The North and South Staffordshires were amalgamated in 1959 into The Staffordshire Regiment which now shares the camp with four other regiments. Today Whittington Barracks are used as a basic training depot for recruits undergoing their baptism for army life.

After driving around the perimeter, we stopped by the main entrance to photograph the sign board. Our presence with camera



immediately alerted the regimental military police and the editor's entry into 'Lichfield stockade' was true to its former history, being marched to the guardroom under escort. Although this building was a modern post-war addition, the barred detention room and guard 'at ease' by the door set the scene perfectly. Fortunately the editor was able to establish his bona-fides with the adjutant who then kindly let us take photographs on the huge parade ground. We were told that all the old barrack blocks are due for demolition within the next two to three years although the old keep will be retained.

Right: Today Court No. 3 has been incorporated into a corner of the reception area at the hotel.

Above: Courtroom No. 3. Below: Waiting to begin the session on May 2 are L-R: Captain Robert E. Hodgins, Major Harry A. Wilson, Major Gordon C. Lord, Lieutenant Colonel Gilbert M. Allen, Colonel Mastig White, Lieutenant Colonel John C. Thompson, Major Needham C. Holden and Captain George J. Adams. (Out of all the Allied forces, only American archives will release photographs of courts-martial in session.)





The insignia of the 10th Replacement Depot — the motto is rather ironic in view of what transpired after the war.

At the time of this visit, we did not have any photographs for comparison and therefore searches were undertaken in London by Roger Bell, our ETO expert, and by our man in Washington, David Hale. Before long we had a fine selection of photographs to warrant a return visit. This time we did things properly and wrote in advance for permission. Major M. K. Beedle, the Regimental Secretary, was most helpful and our second visit was organised for August 7, 1979. This time our guide was Sergeant Ivor Male and we spent several hours touring the barracks to identify the locations of the wartime photographs. All the temporary hutments have now been demolished and naturally no signs remain of the tented camp. This made it impossible to match up some of the pictures but we were very fortunate to have timed our visit to coincide with the rehearsals for the monthly passing out parade. These parades are held for each intake of recruits as they complete their eighteen-week period of basic training. With only a few days left before the parade,



The old keep (now occupied by the Training Wing) dominates the parade ground. To the left a new building now occupies the site of the former US prison.

the RSM was definitely not happy although the repeated march pasts provided us with excellent comparison shots.

The barracks still receive the occasional visitor from America, one of the most recent being one of the officers involved in the court-

martial. The fact that the barracks had a notorious reputation during the war is now in the distant past, although as our sergeant guide remarked, with a smile, 'Some of the recruits consider it still has such a reputation today'.



Above: A combined marching demonstration by American and British bands was held at the 10th Replacement Depot on October 21, 1943. Colonel Kilian stands on the extreme left. Below: Practice for a passing out parade thirty-six years later. The empty reviewing stand is on the left.



The American national flag now hanging in the camp church.



